

Nosebleed (Epistaxis)

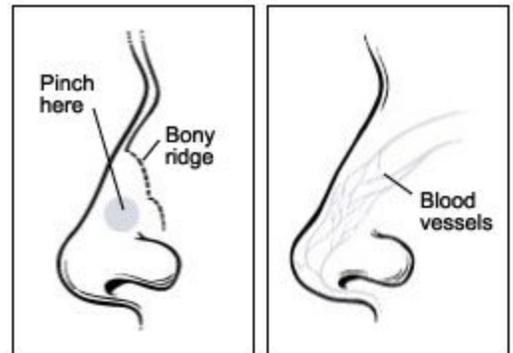
Most nosebleeds are not usually serious and can be stopped with home treatment. Most nosebleeds occur in the front of the nose (anterior epistaxis) and involve only one nostril. Some blood may drain down the back of the nose into the throat. Many things may make a nosebleed more likely.

- **Changes in the environment.** For example: Cold, dry climates; low humidity; High altitude.
- **Injury to the nose.** For example: Hitting or bumping the nose; Blowing or picking the nose; Piercing the nose; An object in the nose.
- **Medical problems.** For example: An abnormal structure inside the nose, such as nasal polyps or a deviated nasal septum; Colds, allergies, or sinus infections; High blood pressure; Kidney disease; Liver disease; Blood clotting disorders; Abnormal blood vessels in the nose.
- **Medicines.** For example: Those that affect blood clotting, such as aspirin, warfarin (such as Coumadin), enoxaparin (Lovenox), clopidogrel (Plavix), or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs); Cold and allergy medicines; Oxygen; Nasal inhalers, such as Afrin; Steroid nasal sprays
- **Nasal abuse** of illegal drugs, such as cocaine and amphetamines.

How to stop a nosebleed

Follow these steps to stop a nosebleed :

- Sit up straight, and tip your head slightly forward. Note: Do not tilt your head back. This may cause blood to run down the back of your throat, and you may swallow it. Swallowed blood can irritate your stomach and cause vomiting. And vomiting may make the bleeding worse or cause it to start again. Spit out any blood that gathers in your mouth and throat rather than swallowing it.
- Use your thumb and forefinger to firmly pinch the soft part of your nose shut. The nose consists of a hard, bony part and a softer part made of cartilage. Nosebleeds usually occur in the soft part of the nose. Spraying the nose with a medicated nasal spray (such as Afrin) before applying pressure may help stop a nosebleed. You will have to breathe through your mouth.
- Apply an ice pack to your nose and cheeks. Cold will constrict the blood vessels and help stop the bleeding.
- Keep pinching for a full 10 minutes. Use a clock to time the 10 minutes. It can seem like a long time. Resist the urge to peek after a few minutes to see if your nose has stopped bleeding.
- Check to see if your nose is still bleeding after 10 minutes. If it is, hold it for 10 more minutes. Most nosebleeds will stop after 10 to 20 minutes of direct pressure.
- Put a thin layer of a saline- or water-based nasal gel, such as NasoGel, or an antiseptic nasal cream inside your nose. Do not blow your nose or put anything else inside your nose for at least 12 hours after the bleeding has stopped.
- Rest quietly for a few hours.



Call your doctor if any of the following occur during home treatment:

- A nosebleed cannot be stopped after 10 to 20 minutes of direct pressure.
- Nosebleeds recur 4 or more times in 1 week after you have tried prevention measures.
- Nosebleeds become more severe or more frequent.