

Treating a nosebleed (epistaxis)

Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Nosebleeds (epistaxis) is bleeding from the nose, caused by damage to the blood vessels lining the nose.

Common causes of damage to the blood vessels include trauma, inflammation, topical drugs (such as nasal sprays), surgery. Some people can have abnormal blood vessels, or even tumours that cause nosebleeds.

Most nosebleeds can be self limiting and generally harmless, however the cause for the damage to the blood vessels in the nose cannot always be identified.

More general causes of damage include high blood pressure, blood clotting disorders, environmental factors (such as temperature, humidity, or altitude), drugs (such as anticoagulants and antiplatelet), and drinking too much alcohol.

Usually a nosebleed will stop when a blood clot forms over the damaged area. If this clot is disturbed your nose may start to bleed again.

To prevent this from happening...

Do not:

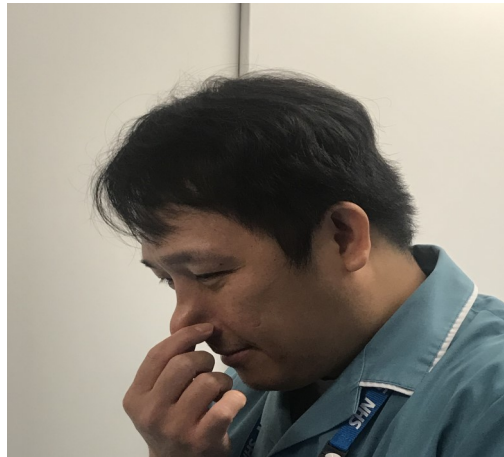
- Blow, rub or pick your nose
- Sneeze through your nose— instead open your mouth to sneeze
- Drink hot drinks or alcohol for 24 hours
- Avoid straining at the toilet and strenuous exercise (involving activities that need, great energy and effort) for a few days

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

If the bleeding does re-start:

- Sit down and firmly pinch your nose, using your finger and thumb to pinch the soft part of your nose, just above your nostrils. You should do this for 15 mins. Time yourself on a watch or clock.



- Lean forward and breathe through your mouth, Leaning forward drains the blood down your nose instead of down the back of your throat. Blood running down the back of your throat may make you vomit.
- Stay sitting, rather than lying down, as this reduces the blood pressure in the veins of your nose and will stop more bleeding.
- In addition to pressure, place a covered ice pack over the bony area or the bridge of your nose and on the back of your neck to help soothe the area and stop the bleeding.
- If blood continues to drip from your nose don't worry, just use a cloth or bowl to catch the blood.
- Keep the pressure on.

After 15 minutes stop the pressure to see if the bleeding has stopped. If not, repeat and maintain the pressure on your nose for another 15 minutes (again, time this on the clock).

If after this time (30 minutes of total pressure) your nose is still bleeding, and you have someone that can drive you then please make your way to the nearest Emergency Department or, please call 999 for assistance.

If the bleeding is minor, and always stops with pressure but keeps happening, please talk to your GP for advice.

Treating a nosebleed in the Emergency Department

There are a number of different ways that doctors can treat nosebleeds depending on the cause of the bleeding.

- **Infection:** when nosebleeds are caused by crusting and infection in the nose, an antibiotic and antiseptic cream can be prescribed. The most common cream used contains **peanut oil** **If you have a peanut allergy please tell the doctor or nurse.** An alternative called antibiotic and antiseptic cream can be used instead, this can be an effective treatment for nosebleeds, especially in children.

- Silver nitrate: this is a chemical which can be used if the bleeding point can be found, and is small. This seals off the area of the bleed. A numbing spray (local anaesthetic) will be sprayed into the nose first before the silver nitrate is applied. The procedure is not painful and can be very effective treatment for nosebleeds. After this procedure (nasal cautery) you will also need to apply cream to your nose.
- Nasal packings: these are commonly used for the treatment of nose bleeds. There are 2 types of packing that can be used. It depends on how serious the bleed is, as to which type is used. Most patients will go home with the nasal packing in place, with clear instructions given by the doctor who has seen you. A follow up appointment will also be arranged in the Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) department for 48 hours' time for removal of the nasal pack. However under certain circumstances you may have to stay in the hospital to be observed, and for removal of the nasal packings.

Discharge advice after treatment of the nosebleed in the Emergency Department

Today your nosebleed stopped after:

☐ **Simple pressure**

Please follow the advice on page 1

☐ **Silver nitrate nasal cautery:**

Please use the cream that you have been prescribed 3 times a day on the affected side for 2 weeks.

☐ **Nasopore pack**

Please see advice below

☐ **Rapid Rhino pack**

Please see advice on the next page.

What do I do if my nose starts to bleed again?

Follow the advice for treating nosebleeds as before.

- You should still squeeze both sides of your nose even if you have a nasal pack in
- Hold for 15 minutes without stopping
- **If after 15 minutes, the bleeding does not stop then come back to the Emergency Department**

Types of packing

Nasopore packing:

A dissolvable nasal pack was placed in the front part of your nose to control bleeding. This packing is made of a substance that helps your blood clot. It will soften and mix with the clot. It will melt, be absorbed, or fall out after a few days.

Follow these guidelines when caring for yourself at home:

- Do not pull on the packing or try to remove it yourself during the first 3 days,
- Do not drink alcohol or hot liquids while the packing is in place. These can dilate blood vessels in your nose and cause bleeding to start again.
- Keep any appointments for packing removal. If you were asked to remove the packing at home, gently blow your nose to dislodge the pack.
- If the packing stays in place blocking the nasal passage for more than 3 days you may get an infection. If you cannot breathe through that nostril after 3 days, contact your doctor.
- Take any antibiotics that were prescribed until you have finished them.

Rapid Rhino packing:

A nasal pack was placed in the front part of your nose. This pack is inflated by the doctor to create pressure on the bleeding point to help stop it.

Follow these guidelines when caring for yourself at home:

- Do not pull on the packing or try to remove it yourself.
- Seek medical advice should the pack become loose, and you start bleeding this could be either an Urgent Care Centre or the Emergency Department.
- Do not drink alcohol or hot liquids while the packing is in place. These can dilate blood vessels in your nose and cause bleeding to start again.
- Keep any appointments for packing removal.
- Go to the Emergency Department if your pain level increases.

Contact details for future problems:

Minor Injuries - Emergency Department or ENT Department

Leicester Royal Infirmary

Via switchboard number 0300 303 1573

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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