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Head and Neck Surgery . Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery . Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR NOSE BLEEDS (EPISTAXIS)

Most nose bleeds are a minor problem. However, they can rarely be life threatening and can be very frightening for the patient and/or the patient's family.

There are two types of nose bleeds:

- Anterior – This type is most common and from the lower part of the septum (the wall that separates the two nostrils of your nose). The septum has a lot of blood vessels that can easily be broken by a sharp fingernail or a blow to the nose. Usually, the blood comes out of only one nostril. In children, nose bleeds are almost always the anterior type. They are also common in dry climates or in the winter when indoor heating is used.
- Posterior – This type is more rare. It begins high and deep in the nose and blood can flow down the back of the mouth and throat. This type of the nose bleed usually occurs in the older adult, people with high blood pressure, or if there is an injury to nose or face.

What to do if your nose bleeds:

1. Sit up with your head slightly forward (do not tilt it back).
2. Pinch all the soft parts of your nose together between your thumb and the side of your index finger. (It does no good to pinch the bridge of your nose).
3. Hold that position for a full 10 minutes by the clock.
4. Keep your head higher than the level of your heart.
5. Apply ice to nose and cheeks.
6. As a last resort, you may spray the nose four times in the bleeding nostril with a decongestant spray such as Afrin or Neo-Syneprine.

When to call the doctor or go to the Emergency Room

- When bleeding cannot be stopped
- When bleeding keeps recurring
- When there is a large blood loss (more than a coffee cup full)
- You feel weak or faint from blood loss
- Blood goes down the back of the throat when you are standing or sitting with your head in the normal position.

Follow these instructions after a nose bleed:

1. Avoid smoking, caffeine, hot beverages and alcohol for one week. Avoid vigorous nose blowing. Keep fingers out of the nose.
2. No Aspirin, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Vitamin E or Ibuprofen until your provider tells you it is okay.
3. Use a cool-mist humidifier in your bedroom for moisture.
4. Apply a Saline Gel (Nasogel, Ayr Gel, pharmacy brand nasal gel) to both sides of the nose three times (3) a day for two (2) weeks, then once a day for four (4) weeks. You can then use nasal saline gel ("Ayr Gel") at bedtime to keep the nose moist and prevent future nose bleeds (especially in the winter or if you have nasal allergy symptoms).
5. Use nasal saline spray 6-8 times a day until your nose is healed.

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