Nosebleed

WHAT IS IT?

Simply put, a nosebleed (epistaxis) is the loss of blood from the tissue that lines the inside of your nose.

The location of the nose in the middle of the face and the large number of blood vessels close to the surface in the lining of your nose make it an easy target for injury and nosebleeds.

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE:

Call your medical provider immediately or have someone drive you to the nearest emergency room or call 911 if:

- You cannot stop the bleeding after more than 15 to 20 minutes of applying direct pressure on your nose.
- The bleeding is rapid or the blood loss is large (more than a cup).
- You are having difficulty breathing.
- You have vomited because you've swallowed a large amount of blood.
- Your nosebleed has followed a blow to your head or serious injury (fall, car accident, smash to your face or nose).

WHAT CAUSES IT?

The most common cause of nosebleeds is dry air. Dry air can be caused by hot, low-humidity climates or heated indoor air. which cause the nasal membrane to dry out. Other common causes of nosebleeds include:

- Nose picking.
- Colds (upper respiratory infection) that cause repeated sneezing, coughing and nose blowing.
- Blowing your nose with force.
- Inserting an object into your nose.
- Injury to the nose and/or face.
- Allergic and non-allergic rhinitis (inflammation of the nasal lining).
- Blood-thinning drugs (aspirin, NSAIDS)
- Cocaine and other drugs inhaled through the nose.
- Chemical irritants (chemicals in cleaning supplies, chemical fumes at the workplace, other strong odors).
- High altitudes. The air is thinner (lack of oxygen) and drier as the altitude increases.
- Frequent use of nasal sprays and medications to treat itchy, runny or stuffy nose.

SELF CARE

- Sit upright and lean your body and your head slightly <u>forward.</u> This will keep the blood from running down your throat, which can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. (Do NOT lay flat, tilt your head backward or put your head between your legs.)
- Breathe through your mouth.
- Use a tissue or damp washcloth to catch the blood.
- Use your thumb and index finger to pinch together the soft part of your nose. Make sure to pinch the soft part of the nose <u>against the hard bony ridge</u> that forms the bridge of the nose. Squeezing at or above the bony part of the nose will not put pressure where it can help stop the bleeding.
- Keep pinching your nose continuously for at least 5 minutes (timed by clock) before checking if the bleeding has stopped. If your nose is still bleeding, continue squeezing the nose for another 10 minutes.
- If you'd like, apply an ice pack to the bridge of your nose to further help constrict blood vessels (which will slow the bleeding) and provide comfort.

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional.

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