

EPISTAXIS

Bleeding from the nose is commonly caused by dry nasal membranes, high blood pressure, or nasal trauma.

If a bleeding site is found, it may be treated with a chemical, heat, or electricity (cauterized) to stop the bleeding. If the bleeding continues or the bleeding site cannot be visualized, nasal packing may be placed. Some packing is similar to a gauze, but it is dissolvable and does not have to be removed by a doctor.

Other types of packing, including regular gauze packing and nasal balloon packing must be removed by your doctor.

This packing must remain in place for at least 48 hours before it can be removed. Do not attempt to remove nasal packing on your own. Removing nasal packing too soon will result in a nosebleed.

What can I do to prevent a nosebleed?

- 1) Daily use of plain nasal saline spray can help prevent drying of nasal membranes.*
- 2) You may lubricate the nasal passages by gently applying a small amount of Vaseline inside the nose with a Q-tip twice a day (morning and night).*
- 3) Avoid overheating your home, which can dry the air and worsen your condition.*
- 4) Using a humidifier in your home, especially in the winter months, can help keep the air moist and the nasal membranes lubricated.*
- 5) If you are prone to nosebleeds, and while you have nasal packing in place, do not use ibuprofen or aspirin products unless you have been instructed otherwise by your doctor. These medications can thin the blood and promote nosebleeds. You may use Tylenol (acetaminophen) products, following the dosage instructions on the packaging.*
- 6) If you have a nosebleed, avoid hot liquids and alcohol for the next two days. These liquids in your mouth can dilate blood vessels in your nose and cause bleeding to start again.*
- 7) Avoid forceful nose-blowing, and DO NOT blow your nose for 12 hours following a nosebleed. This will allow a strong blood clot to form. Do not pick your nose.*

What if the bleeding starts again?

When a nosebleed occurs, there are a few steps you can take to stop the bleeding on your own. See illustration below. Sit up and lean forward to prevent swallowing blood. Pinch the soft part of your nose continuously for 10 minutes (time this with a clock). If the bleeding is not controlled, repeat this for another 10 minutes. If the nosebleed continues, call your doctor or go to your nearest emergency room.

