



nosebleeds

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The information contained in this publication is general information only. NHF does not give medical advice or engage in the practice of medicine. NHF under no circumstances recommends particular treatments for specific individuals and in all cases recommends that you consult your physician or local treatment center before pursuing any course of treatment.

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■ **Are nosebleeds serious?**

Bleeding from the nose — also called epistaxis — can be a common site of blood loss, especially in people with bleeding disorders. In fact, frequent and difficult-to-stop nosebleeds are a typical reason people are initially referred to a hematologist. Nosebleeds can be minor nuisances or major events that require medical attention in the hospital or emergency room.

■ **Why do nosebleeds seem to happen so easily?**

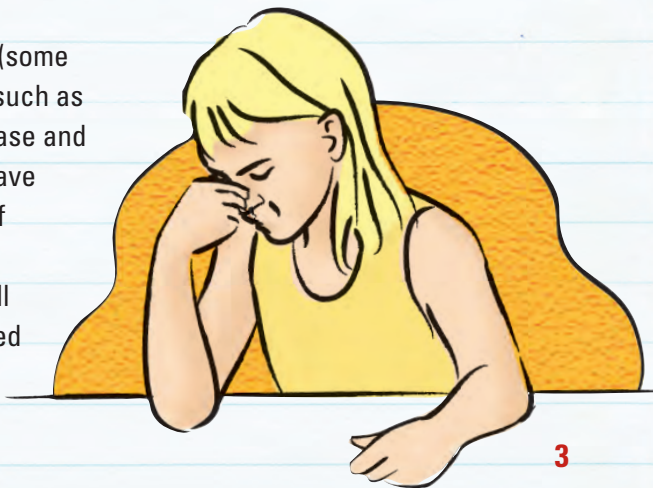
Nasal cavities are lined with a mucous membrane, which is filled with blood vessels. When the membrane is injured or broken, nosebleeds result. Blood leaks from these broken vessels into the nasal cavity and out of the nostrils, or sometimes down the back of the throat.

■ **What are some of the factors that can contribute to nosebleeds?**

A variety of factors can increase your risk of getting a nosebleed. These factors can be present alone or in combination. They may be avoided or treated to decrease the likelihood of nosebleeds recurring or requiring more serious treatment.

Some of the more common risk factors include:

- Trauma or injury — Wearing appropriate sports equipment may help reduce injuries that can cause bleeding.
- Nose picking or forceful nose blowing
- Dry air, especially in winter
- Hot air, such as in hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms
- Smoke
- Genetic risk factors (some bleeding disorders, such as von Willebrand disease and platelet disorders, have a higher likelihood of nosebleeds)
- Infections — Take all antibiotics as directed by physician.



- Allergies, including environmental triggers
- Medications — Talk to your bleeding disorder treatment center team if nosebleeds seem to increase with the use of a new medication.
- Low platelet count (thrombocytopenia)
- Advanced liver disease (low levels of liver-dependent clotting factors)
- High blood pressure — Take your medications as directed by your physician.
- Swimming, especially right after a recent nosebleed or in a highly chlorinated pool
- Anatomic issues:
 - deviated septum (abnormal condition of the nose in which one side of the nose is narrower than the other, causing an obstruction of the nasal passage)
 - telangiectasias (spider veins or small dilated blood vessels near the surface of the skin)
 - a thin mucosal membrane (thin lining of the body cavities including the nose)

■ **When should someone seek medical care?**

Always call your bleeding disorder treatment center or physician if you experience any of the following:

- Prolonged bleeding which does not stop with pressure or other remedies
- Nosebleeds that have lasted for several hours
- Vomiting blood or “coffee ground”-looking material
- Signs of anemia (paleness, dizziness, headaches, shortness of breath)
- Frequent small nosebleeds that stop easily but continue for weeks

■ **What can someone do if they have frequent nosebleeds?**

If you have frequent nosebleeds, you may be able to care for them yourself using a few simple steps:

- Gently blow out mucus and unstable clots through the nose
- Pinch the bridge of the nose and lean slightly forward, holding pressure for a minimum of 10 minutes, but not more than 20 minutes at a time

- Set a timer during the pressure-holding period
- Use distraction techniques or other activities while applying pressure
- Practice Universal Precautions—Protect your hands, eyes, and mouth from coming in contact with blood or other body fluids
- Develop and maintain an “action plan” for nosebleeds:
 - Teach children what to do if they have a nosebleed
 - Keep supplies and resources readily available
 - Carry nose clamps in the backpack or car—remember to **only clamp for 10 minutes at a time**
 - Carry a dark or red washcloth (disguises the blood from the child)
 - Pack your travel bag with plastic bags, a dark towel, dark pillowcase, wipes
- Time the nosebleed and record this information
- Call your bleeding disorder treatment center/physician/nurse as directed
- Keep fingernails short to avoid accidentally scratching the inside of the nose
- Avoid picking the nose
- Apply ice on the nose (Use a flexible ice pack or something similar, approx. 6” long x 1” wide) —and protect skin from ice burn
- Rest after stopping the nosebleed (keep cool, no swimming or outdoor sports for a few hours)
- Avoid hot foods the day of the nosebleed

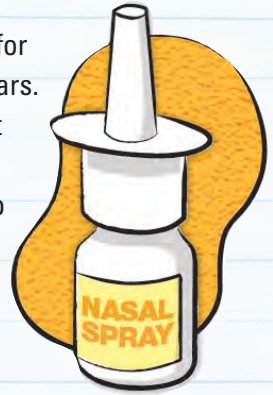


■ What are the treatment options?

The following is a list of some of the products and strategies that people have reported as helpful in the management of nosebleeds. These options may or may not be appropriate for you. Share this list with your healthcare team and discuss which treatment is best for you.

Nonprescription Treatment Options

- Afrin® or Neo-Synephrine® Nasal Spray is used to constrict vessels in the nose and may stop a nosebleed. The products are available over-the-counter in all major pharmacies.
- Claritin® can be used to alleviate allergy symptoms. This product is available over-the-counter in all major pharmacies.
- NasalCEASE™ — A nasal pack inserted into the nose for 30 minutes. Not recommended for children under 12 years.
- NosebleedQR® — Topical powder to stop bleeding. Put powder on applicator and apply to bleeding mucous membrane of nostril. To order, call 1-800-722-7559, or go to <http://www.biolife.com>
- Nose clamp — **Caution:** Leave on only for 10 minutes at a time to prevent damage to the nose cartilage
- Salt pork — Cut bullet-shaped pieces large enough to fit snugly in the person's nostrils. Wrap the plugs in wax paper and place in freezer. When ready to use, unwrap two frozen plugs, apply triple antibiotic ointment as directed by physician, and push one up each nostril. Put a large piece of tape across the ends of both nostrils to hold the plugs in place overnight. When ready to remove, pull off the tape, and the plugs will slide out.



Prescription Treatment Options (Contact your Bleeding Disorder Treatment Center)

Oral agents (Medicine taken by mouth to prevent the breakdown of clots):

Aminocaproic acid: Amicar® Tranexamic Acid: Cyklokapron®

Nasal products (Nasal sprays used to stimulate or replace the production of low levels of clotting factor in the blood):

Desmopressin Acetate Nasal Spray: Stimate® (US), Octostim® (Canada)

Factor replacement products as directed by your bleeding disorder treatment center

Locally-applied hemostatic products (Creams or gels used to prevent the breakdown of clots or aid in clot formation):

Arista™ AH	Instat®
Avitene®	Surgicel®
Estrogen cream to nostrils	Thrombin
Floseal™	Tisseel®
Gelfoam®	Helistat®

Ointments to prevent nosebleeds:

Many physicians recommend using lubricating creams or ointments to keep the mucous membranes of the nostrils moist and to promote healing by preventing bacterial infection. The following are generally available without a prescription:

- Bactroban Nasal® ointment
- Polysporin® ointment
- Neosporin® ointment
- Vaseline®

■ **How can nosebleeds be prevented?**

To help prevent a nosebleed:

- Use a cool mist humidifier while sleeping
- Use a saline nasal spray (e.g., Ocean Nasal Spray®) four times a day
- Use a water-soluble nose gel (e.g., Rhinaris® or Secaris®) inside the nostrils three to four times a day
- Apply Ayr Gel® (US), Bacitracin, Polysporin®, or Vaseline® to the nasal openings before going to sleep (may also apply during the day)
- Wear scarves to cover the nose in the winter
- Increase fluid intake
- Sleep in a cool room

In addition, one should avoid:

- Picking the nose, harsh blowing of the nose, and/or blowing the nose immediately after a shower
- Diving into a swimming pool
- Bending over for a long time, which puts pressure on the nose
- Inhaling secondhand smoke (in the home, car or other enclosed places)

Remember to contact your bleeding disorder treatment center any time you feel your nosebleeds have lasted too long or are occurring every day. For a directory of bleeding disorder treatment centers, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/hbd/hemophilia.htm> and click on HTC Directory



NATIONAL HEMOPHILIA FOUNDATION
for all bleeding and clotting disorders

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The National Hemophilia Foundation is dedicated to finding better treatments and cures for bleeding and clotting disorders and to preventing the complications of these disorders through education, advocacy and research. Its programs and initiatives are made possible through the generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations as well as through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).