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# ***Epistaxis (nosebleed) and nasal packing***

***Information for  
patients and carers***

**Emergency Department  
Aberdeen Royal Infirmary**

## ***What is epistaxis?***

Epistaxis is bleeding from the nose.

## ***What causes epistaxis?***

Nosebleeds are common. Some people are more likely to have nosebleeds than others. Often the cause is unknown. Causes can include:

### **Local causes (caused by an issue with your nose):**

- Recent colds and nose blowing
- Drying out of the inside of the nose
- Picking your nose.

### **Systemic causes (caused by a wider issue):**

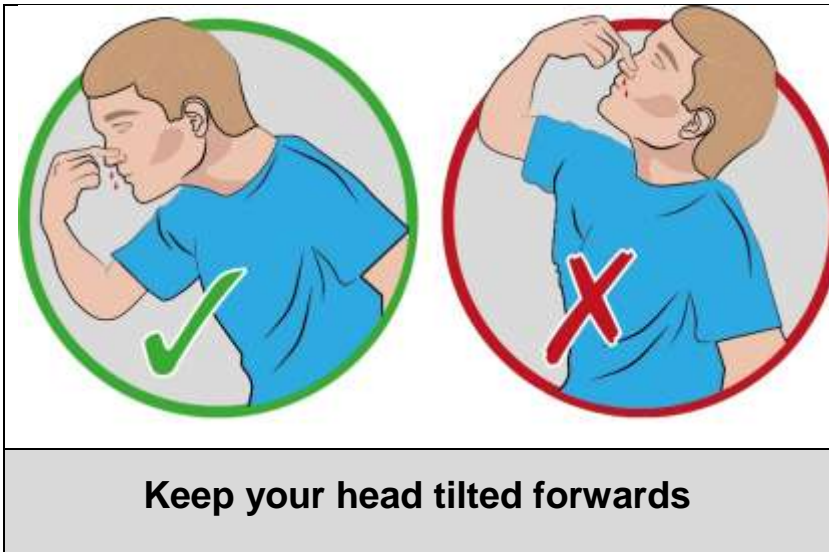
- Bleeding disorders
- Anti-coagulant (blood thinning) drugs such as warfarin

If you have high blood pressure, it may make it harder for the bleeding to stop.

## ***What can I do to try to stop a nosebleed?***

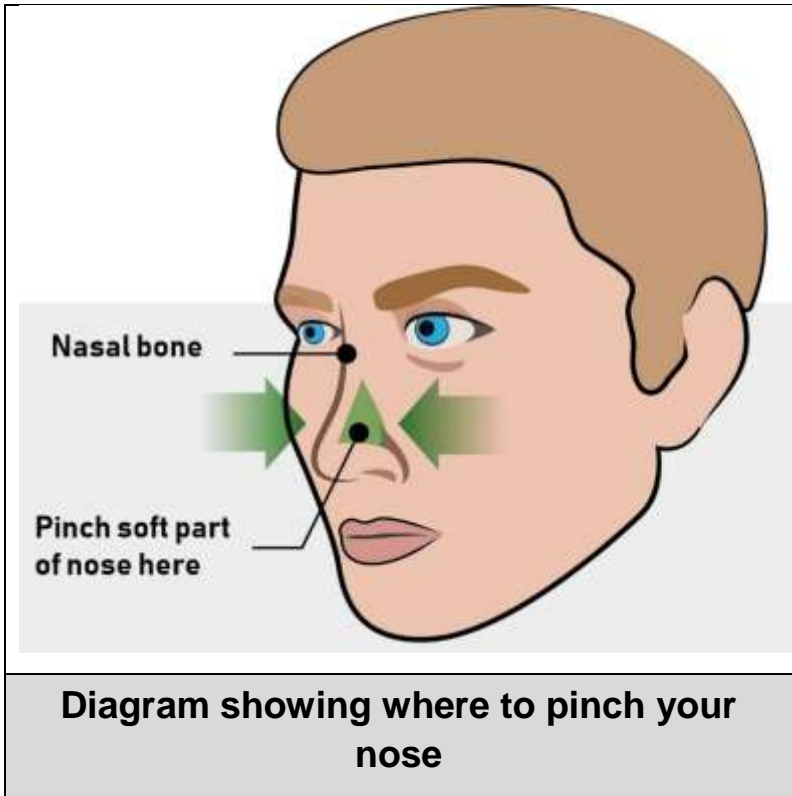
Nine out of 10 (90%) nosebleeds occur at the front of the nose and can often be stopped by following the advice below in steps 1 to 5.

1. Sit with your head tilted forward, with your mouth open, and breathe through your mouth.



2. Pinch the **soft fleshy** part of your nose firmly between your thumb and forefinger for **10 to 15 minutes**. Look at a clock and time this.

**Don't** be tempted to let go sooner as all your good work can be undone by 10 seconds of curiosity to see if the bleeding has stopped.



3. Apply an ice pack to the bridge of your nose or suck an ice cube.
4. Try not to swallow the blood as this can make you feel sick or vomit; try to spit it out.
5. If the bleeding doesn't stop after 10 to 15 minutes of constant pressure, seek medical attention.

## ***Going home after a nosebleed***

The doctor will have looked at and evaluated the cause of your nosebleed.

If you've been prescribed a cream (called Naseptin®) for your nose, it's important to use it as instructed.

Apply a small amount of the cream to the tip of your finger, insert it just inside the entrance to your nostril and sniff.

Apply four times a day for 10 days.

**Do not use Naseptin® cream if you are allergic to peanuts or soya.**

Naseptin® contains an antibiotic and a disinfectant.

It helps to:

- Heal the inside of your nose
- Prevent infection
- Moisturise dry areas to prevent cracking

If you can't use Naseptin®, simple petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline®) can be used as an alternative

## ***What can I do to prevent another nosebleed?***

After having a nosebleed your nose is more likely to be vulnerable to another bleed.

To help prevent another nosebleed:

- Try to keep your nose moist by applying petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline®) to the nostrils (only if you are a non-smoker).
- Try to avoid blowing your nose for about 7 to 10 days.
- If you need to sneeze, try and sneeze with your mouth open to reduce the pressure in your nose.
- Avoid hot drinks for 48 hours.
- Avoid hot showers or baths – warm is fine. Hot water causes the blood vessels in your nose to dilate (widen) which can make your nose bleed.
- If you smoke, try to stop smoking for 7 to 10 days as smoking causes the blood vessels in your nose to dilate.
- Avoid drinking alcohol as this can make you more prone to bleeding.
- Avoid heavy lifting or sudden bending.
- Avoid vigorous activity.
- Don't put anything other than prescribed cream or petroleum jelly into your nose. No cotton buds or tissues!

## ***Further Information only for patients going home with Nasal Packing***

### ***What is a nasal pack?***

A nasal pack is a specially designed device inserted into your nose to stop the nose from bleeding.

### ***Going home with a nasal pack***

Some patients can go home with a nasal pack and return to the ENT department for removal in one to two days after insertion.

This can be uncomfortable and the staff in the Emergency Department should have optimised the pressure in the nasal packs and ensured you have access to good pain killers before you go home.

You will also get written details of the ENT appointment which will be written below

### ***What will happen at the ENT appointment?***

The nasal pack will be removed and an examination of your nose will be performed.

Patients sometimes need cauterisation of the blood vessel or area responsible for the nosebleed.

Cauterisation is a quick treatment used to seal a small area that's bleeding.

### ***Is it normal to experience pain or discomfort?***

It is normal to experience pain or discomfort once a nasal pack has been inserted. Take regular painkillers such as paracetamol and/or codeine to help with the pain.

### ***Can I still have a nosebleed with a nasal pack in my nose?***

You won't be sent home if you still have active bleeding. It's normal to have a small trickle or slight ooze of blood, sometimes mixed with mucus.

If you have ongoing bleeding past the nasal pack, or from your other nostril, your mouth, and/or the corner of your eye(s), please phone the ENT ward on **01224 552012**.

They will tell you if you should go back to the Emergency Department or the ENT ward. They can make sure the right team is ready to see you.

If you're unsure what to do, or you cannot get through on the phone and the bleeding is still happening, go to the Emergency Department. They can contact the ENT doctor for you.

## ***Will I go home with medications?***

Paracetamol and other painkillers can help with pain. The Emergency Department may provide you with Dihydrocodeine (or a similar medicine). This is a stronger painkiller that is taken along with Paracetamol. Patients are often asked to take regular Paracetamol to help with pain.

Patients are sometimes prescribed oral Tranexamic Acid. This medicine helps to maintain blood clots. The ENT specialist will tell you when you can stop taking this medication. Let them know if you develop any side effects.

## ***What are the side effects of Tranexamic Acid?***

If you have any of the side effects listed below, stop taking Tranexamic Acid. Contact your GP, or phone the ENT clinic or ward.

- diarrhoea
- nausea and/or vomiting
- swelling, redness, or pain in your lower leg

## ***What should I do, and not do, when I go home with a nasal pack?***

### **Do:**

- Ensure you attend the ENT Specialist appointment for the removal of the nasal pack.
- Ensure you take regular painkillers. They can help you with any discomfort or pain from the nasal pack.
- Avoid bending forward, lifting heavy objects, or exerting yourself.
- Contact the ENT Ward directly on 01224 552100 or seek emergency medical attention if you:
  - become unwell with a fever
  - experience significant pain or swelling around the nose and face.
  - develop any visual problems

### **Don't:**

- Do not pull or try to adjust the nasal pack.
- Do not blow your nose.
- Do not breathe in tobacco smoke or other fumes that may irritate your nose.
- Do not take hot drinks or food. Let them cool first.

## ***For Completion in the Emergency Department***

### ***Nasal pack details***

Date of insertion:

Time of insertion:

Emergency department: Aberdeen Royal Infirmary

### ***ENT Clinic Appointment details***


Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: Ward 210, Pink Zone, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary

### ***Contact numbers***

ENT ward/clinic:

 01224 552012

### ***Further Information***

Further information can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nosebleed>

**This leaflet is also available in large print.**

**Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on 01224 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 1822.**

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call 01224 554149 to let us know.

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