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Epistaxis (nosebleed)

***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):

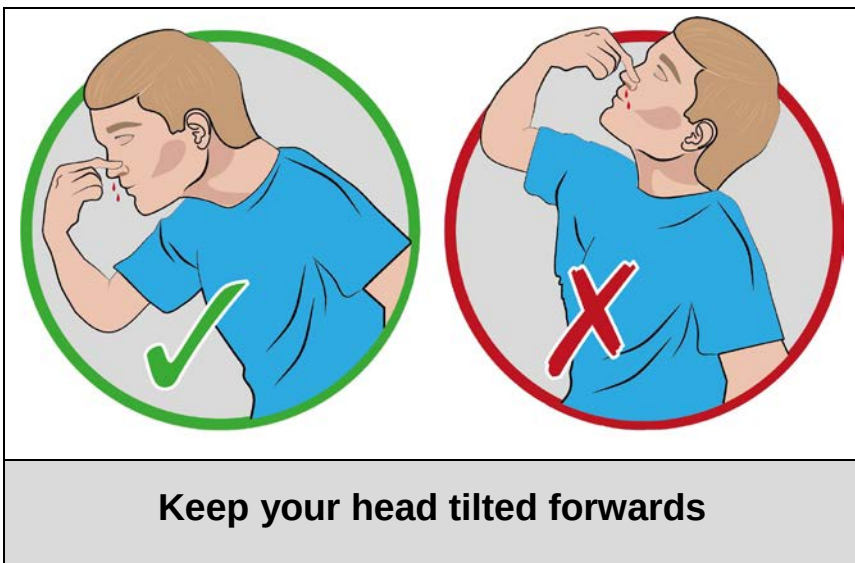
- Bleeding disorders
- Anti-coagulant (blood thinning) drugs such as warfarin

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?

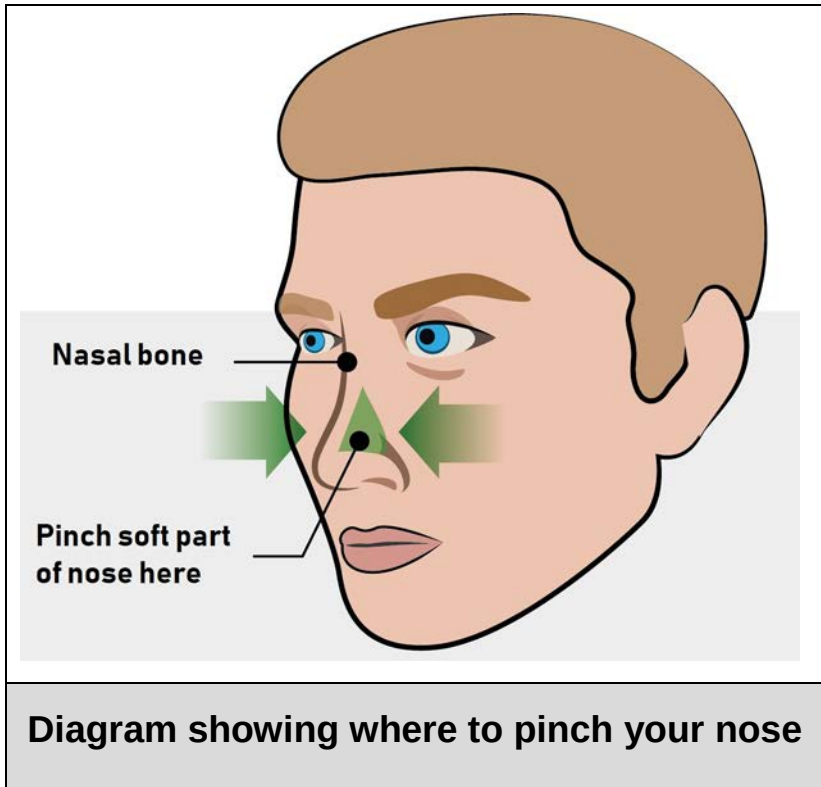
Nine out of 10 (90%) nosebleeds occur at the front of the nose and can often be stopped by following the advice below in steps 1 to 5.

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 twice 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

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!

Where can I find out more?

For more information, please discuss with your GP or visit the NHS Choices website.

NHS Choices

 www.nhs.uk

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.