

Epistaxis – Nose bleeds and the Superdry Nose

Your Doctor has asked me to have a closer look inside your nose to **rule out rare causes of nose bleeds**. Things like infections, harmless growths, systemic diseases, clotting disorders and extremely rarely, nose cancers. Once we have ruled those things out, I will teach you **how to make the nose stop bleeding** and how to prevent those **sometimes very painful cracks and crusts**.

Nose bleeds (and crusts) are **extremely common**. **Everybody gets them** and they are more common in the **Winter** because of the colder and drier weather. (Your nose is a heater, filter and humidifier so **the more blood vessels it has, the happier it is!**) After Winter, the second most common cause is **fingers and Kleenex!** Another common cause is medications like **blood thinners** (Aspirin, Plavix, Pradax), blood pressure medications and **nose sprays** (Otrivin, Dristan, Flonase, Nasonex, Avamys). Surprisingly, **high blood pressure almost never increases your chances** of nose bleeds.

Almost 95% of nose bleeds occur on the front part of a structure in your nose called the **septum**. This is the wall between your 2 nose holes. The bleeds come from **little veins (not arteries)** that are thin and **crack easily when dry or “picked” on**. The good news is they can also be easily compressed, hydrated and treated.

The key to stopping nose bleeds is to actually **do something**. “Waiting it out” is not the answer. By far the best thing to do is to **prevent them from happening in the first place**. You must not let your nose lining get too dry. We recommend a **cool mist/fan humidifier** in the bedroom. **The one on your furnace is not good enough** and the steaming kind just make your floors wet. The second thing you absolutely should do is **stick a glob of Coconut oil in your nose at bedtime and snort it in**. **You can also use a soaked Cottonball – Never use Q-Tips inside your nose**. Just put it in each nostril for 2 seconds at **bedtime and whenever the nose feels really dry**. This simple act prevents 99% of all nose bleeds!

OK, so **what are you supposed to do if the nose is actually bleeding** already? Unless you have a hole inside your nose (pretty common actually) the nose usually bleeds from one side more than the other. Here are some great ways to stop or really slow down almost all nose bleeds:

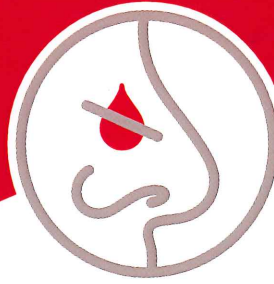
1. **Soak** a cottonball with Polysporin or Vaseline and stick in inside the nostril for 2 hours.
2. Suck on an **ice cube or have some ice cream**. (A lot of the blood comes from your palate).
3. **Relax, lean forward** a bit and take slow deep breaths through your mouth. It is OK if some blood comes out of your nose or even into your mouth.
4. If however, it is still bleeding after 15 minutes or you are swallowing a lot of blood (irritates the stomach) you should go to the **UofA (Not the Mis, Grey Nuns or Royal Alec) ER department** or call an Ambulance (if you don't have a driver.) **A clinic is not a good option because most clinics do not have the proper equipment to deal with major nose bleeds.**

One more thing. You must not stress your body (or your nose) for at least 2 weeks after you have had a good nose bleed. That means no **heavy lifting, bending over, getting angry or straining**. Try to **avoid competitive sports, blowing your nose too hard, sneezing and very hot liquids**. Try not to lay down flat. At least a couple of pillows or a recliner are a must. Aim for a **30 to 45 degree angle**.

Dr. Jon M. Adamis MD, FRCS (C)

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