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University Health Board

# Nosebleed Advice

## Nosebleed (Epistaxis)

You came to the Emergency Department/MIU with a nosebleed that wouldn't stop. This leaflet tells you more about what causes nosebleeds and how to cope with them at home.

### Why have I had a nosebleed?

Nosebleeds usually start from the nasal septum (the cartilage between the nostrils) where the blood vessels are quite fragile. Often there is no apparent trigger for a nosebleed but some common causes for a nosebleed are:

- ❖ Colds/ sneezing and blocked nose such as with hayfever.
- ❖ Changes in humidity or temperature causing the inside of the nose to become dry and cracked (i.e. in air-conditioned rooms with dry air).
- ❖ Picking the nose.
- ❖ Blowing the nose.
- ❖ Anti-coagulation therapy (blood thinning medication)
- ❖ High blood pressure.
- ❖ Physical or emotional stress.
- ❖ Cocaine use.
- ❖ Nasal polyps (benign growths on the inside of the nasal lining).
- ❖ Foreign bodies (usually in children).
- ❖ A minor injury to your nose

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant  
Emergency Department: Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287  
Or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):  
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056  
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073  
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353  
Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**

After a nosebleed - Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest at home, but not in bed</li> <li>• Avoid hot drinks and alcohol for 24 hours - these can cause the blood vessels in your nose to get bigger which may start another bleed.</li> <li>• Take laxatives if needed for constipation, to avoid straining</li> <li>• <b>If you have been given an antiseptic cream, this should be applied to the nostrils as advised. This will help to reduce crusting. Place a small amount of the cream on the tip of your little finger and carefully apply inside one nostril. Repeat for the other nostril.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow, rub, pick or try to clean the inside of your nose. The crusting discomfort you may feel is part of the healing process, and if you remove the crusts, you may infect the area or cause another nosebleed.</li> <li>• Sneeze violently - if necessary, sneeze with your mouth open. This is not easy but will stop sudden pressure within your nose.</li> <li>• Do any strenuous exercise or heavy lifting and bending over for a week after a nosebleed and avoid stressful situations as they can cause your blood pressure to rise and increase the chances of a nosebleed.</li> <li>• Smoke – also stay away from crowded, smoky places and, if possible, from people who have coughs or colds as your nose is susceptible to infection and irritation while it is healing.</li> </ul>

### If the bleeding does start again you should

- If you are not feeling faint, sit up and lean forward, breathe through your mouth and pinch high up on the soft part of the nose with your finger and thumb tightly, **without letting go for at least 15 minutes.** Some blood may still drip from the nose – do not worry-keep on pressing. The direct pressure stops the bleeding and allows the blood to clot at the site of the broken blood vessels.
- Repeat for another 15 minutes if it is still bleeding.
- If the bleeding has not stopped after this, or you feel unwell, return to the ED/MIU.
- Ice packs can be applied to the forehead or bridge of the nose (a packet of frozen peas or similar makes a good ice pack).
- If you feel that blood is trickling down the back of your throat, try not to swallow it, as blood can irritate the stomach and cause you to be sick.

Sometimes, the bleeding may be coming from further back in the nose. In those cases, bleeding is usually heavy and difficult to control by pinching the nose only.

## Recurrent nosebleeds

If you keep having nosebleeds your GP may refer you to the ENT Clinic for further specialist advice.

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 2- 3 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen**

References:

**Scenario: Acute epistaxis | Management | Epistaxis (nosebleeds) | CKS | NICE**

**Nosebleed | NHS inform**

**This document is available in Welsh/  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**