

Nosebleed

What causes nosebleeds?

Nosebleeds are usually caused by dryness of the nasal lining and the normal rubbing and picking that all children do when their noses are blocked or itchy. Vigorous nose blowing can also cause bleeding. Children who have nasal allergies are more likely to have nosebleeds because they rub and blow their noses more. Nosebleeds are very common throughout childhood.

How can I help stop the bleeding?

- Have your child sit up, lean forward, and spit out any blood. Have a basin available so he can spit out any blood that drains into his throat. Swallowed blood is irritating to the stomach. Don't be surprised if it is vomited up.
- Have your child blow his nose to free any large clots. Then tightly pinch the soft part of the nose between your thumb and forefinger for 10 minutes. Have your child breathe through his mouth. Don't release the pressure until 10 minutes are up. If the bleeding continues, you may not be pressing on the right spot.
- If bleeding continues, insert a gauze covered with decongestant nosedrops (for example, Neo-Synephrine) or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) into the nostril. Squeeze again for 10 minutes. Leave the gauze in for another 10 minutes before you remove it. If bleeding continues, call your child's health care provider but continue the pressure in the meantime.

Common mistakes in treating nosebleed

- A cold washcloth applied to the forehead, bridge of the nose, back of the neck, or under the upper lip does not help stop nosebleeds.
- Pressing on the bony part of the nose does not help stop nosebleeds.

How can I help prevent nosebleeds?

- A small amount of petroleum jelly or vaseline applied twice a day to the center wall inside the nose (the septum) often helps relieve dryness and irritation.
- Increasing the humidity in the room at night by using a humidifier may also be helpful.
- Giving your child extra Vitamin C daily to strengthen their capillaries (what causes the bleeding)
- Get your child into the habit of putting 2 or 3 drops of warm water in each nostril before blowing a stuffy nose.
- Avoid aspirin. One aspirin can increase the tendency of the body to bleed easily for up to a week and can make nosebleeds last much longer.
- If your child has nasal allergies, treating allergic symptoms with antihistamines (OTC Claritin/Zyrtec) will help break the itching-bleeding cycle.

When should I call my child's health care provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The bleeding does not stop after 20 minutes of direct pressure on the nose.

Call during office hours if:

- Nosebleeds are a frequent problem even after petroleum jelly and humidification are used.
- You have other concerns or questions.

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