

Nose Bleeds (Epistaxis)



 Office d'éducation des patients du CUSM
MUHC Patient Education Office



This material is also available on the
MUHC Health Education Collection (<http://infotheque.muhc.ca/>)
MUHC Patient Education Office (www.muhcpatienteducation.ca).

This material was developed by the McGill
University Health Centre Emergency Department.

What is wrong?

Nose bleeds are common. Most frequently they happen when the inside of the nose gets irritated by dry air, cold air, nose-picking, infections, or medicines. In the majority of cases, nose bleeds are not serious. Occasionally, they do require medical attention.

What should I do at home?

To prevent new nose bleeds:

- ▶ Avoid nose blowing or strenuous exercise for at least 1 week after the nose bleed.
- ▶ Use an air humidifier in the room where you sleep.
- ▶ Keep your nose moist with saline nasal spray or gel.
- ▶ Avoid nose-picking.
- ▶ Stop smoking.

To control an ongoing nose bleed:

- ▶ Start by blowing your nose to get rid of clots.
- ▶ Sit and bend slightly forward. Avoid lying down.
- ▶ Squeeze both nostrils on the soft part of the nose and hold for 15 minutes.
- ▶ **DO NOT** release the pressure to check if the bleeding stopped before the end of the 15 minutes.
- ▶ You may repeat the above steps twice. If the bleeding hasn't stopped, you should seek emergency medical care.

When am I going to feel better?

As soon as the nose bleed stops, you should feel better.

Should I see another doctor?

Sometimes the emergency physician has to place a packing in your nose to stop the bleeding. This packing needs to be removed in the next few days by a doctor.

The emergency doctor might refer you to an ear-nose-throat specialist.

When should I come back to the Emergency Department?

- ▶ If you are unable to stop the nose bleed
- ▶ If you have difficulty breathing
- ▶ If you have palpitations or chest pain
- ▶ If you feel weak

If you leave the emergency department with a packing in your nose, you should return:

- ▶ If you have bleeding around the packing
- ▶ If there is foul smelling discharge from your nose
- ▶ If you have increasing pain around your nose
- ▶ If you have fever over 38°C/100.4°F

Notes