

NOSEBLEEDS

Nosebleeds (epistaxis) are very common throughout childhood. They are usually caused by dryness of the nasal lining plus the normal rubbing and picking that all children do when the nose is blocked. Vigorous nose blowing can also cause bleeding. Children who have nasal allergies or who are recovering from a cold are more likely to have nosebleeds because they rub and blow their noses more often. Nosebleeds usually don't mean your child has some bleeding disorder.

Stopping the bleeding can be accomplished by the following measures.

1. Lean forward and spit out any blood. Have your child sit up and lean forward so he does not have to swallow the 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.

2. Apply pressure by squeezing the soft part of the nose. First your child should blow his nose to free any large clots that might interfere with applying pressure. Then tightly pinch the soft parts of the nose against the center wall for 10 minutes. Don't release the pressure until 10 minutes are up. If the bleeding continues, you may not be pressing on the right spot. During this time, your child will have to breathe through his mouth.

3. If bleeding still continues, try letting up and have your child forcibly blow his nose to clear out any large clots that may be making it difficult to apply pressure to the bleeding site. Then, try pinching the nose center wall again for 10 minutes.

4. If bleeding continues, use decongestant nose drops and squeeze again. If the nosebleed hasn't stopped, spray the inside of the nose with decongestant nose spray (for example, Afrin or Neo-Synephrine). You can also try inserting a gauze sprayed with the decongestant or petroleum jelly into the nostril. Squeeze again for 10 minutes. Leave the gauze in for another 10 minutes before you remove it. If bleeding persists, call our office but continue the pressure in the meantime.

There are some things you can do to help prevent recurrent nosebleeds. A small amount of petroleum jelly 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 humidifier may also be helpful. Get your child into the habit of putting two or three drops of warm water in each nostril before blowing a stuffy nose. If your child has nasal allergies, treating allergic symptoms with antihistamines will help break the itching-bleeding cycle. 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.

Of course, call us at **943-7337** if the bleeding persists, your child acts ill, or your child has a rash or any excessive bruising. **GOOD LUCK!**