



# Low Country ENT

EAR, NOSE & THROAT • HEAD & NECK SURGERY  
HEARING AIDS • BALANCE TESTING

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## **Nosebleed (Epistaxis)**

*The purpose of the nose is to warm and humidify the air that we breathe in. The nose is lined with many blood vessels that lie close to the surface where they can be injured and bleed.*

### **Common causes of Nosebleeds:**

- Dry, heated, indoor air or dry, hot, low-humidity outdoor climates.
- Colds (upper respiratory infections) and sinusitis
- Vigorous nose blowing or nose picking
- Use of drugs that thin the blood (aspirin, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, warfarin)
- The insertion of a foreign object into the nose
- Allergic and non-allergic rhinitis (inflammation of the nasal lining)
- High blood pressure
- Chemical irritants (e.g., cocaine, industrial chemicals, others)
- Deviated septum (an abnormal shape of the structure that separates the two sides of the nose)
- Tumors or inherited bleeding disorders (rare)
- Facial and nasal trauma or surgery

### **How are nosebleeds stopped?**

- Sit down and lean your body and head slightly forward. This will keep the blood from running down your throat, which can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. (Do NOT lay flat or put your head between your legs.)
- Use your thumb and index finger to pinch together the soft part of your nose
- Keep pinching your nose continuously for at least 5 minutes. If you are still bleeding, use Afrin<sup>®</sup> and continue squeezing the nose for another 10 minutes.
- If the bleeding does not stop call your physician or go to the Emergency Room.
- Once the bleeding stops, DO NOT bend over; strain and/or lift anything heavy; and DO NOT blow, rub, or pick your nose for several days.

### **Are there any steps I can take to prevent nosebleeds?**

- Use an over-the-counter saline nasal spray or saline nose drops 2-3 times a day in each nostril.
- To make the saline solution at home: mix 1 teaspoon of salt into 1 quart of tap water. Boil water for 20 minutes, cool until lukewarm.
- Add a humidifier to your furnace or run a humidifier in your bedroom at night.
- Place water-soluble nasal gels or ointments in the front part of the nose with a cotton swab. Bacitracin<sup>®</sup>, Vaseline<sup>®</sup>, or Ayr Gel<sup>®</sup> are examples. Be sure not to insert the swab more than ¼ inch into your nose.
- If you need to blow your nose, be gentle. Sneeze through an open mouth.
- Avoid putting anything solid into your nose, including fingers and cotton applicators.
- Limit your use of medications that can increase bleeding, such as aspirin and ibuprofen.
- Ask your primary care physician before stopping any medications.
- Quit smoking. Smoking dries out your nose and irritates it.