



Ear, Nose, Throat

Sinus, Allergy, Audiology

Snoring & Sleep Apnea

MINNEAPOLIS OTOLARYNGOLOGY, P.A.

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Nosebleeds (Epistaxis)

Nose bleeds are common, and most are minor, but sometimes they can be quite serious and require emergency medical attention.

Causes of Nosebleeds

- Nose picking, excessive rubbing, scratching, excessive nose blowing
- Dryness - very common in the winter in Minnesota, but with the use of air conditioning in the summer the air can be dry as well
- High Blood Pressure - pressure which is consistently over 140/90 is considered too high
- Blood thinners - examples are aspirin or other Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory drug (NSAID), Plavix, coumadin (Warfarin)
- Abnormal blood vessels - in children and some adults, there can be blood vessels that are abnormally near the surface of the lining of the nose, that are fragile and break easily
- Inherited disorder of clotting (rare) - examples are hemophilia, Von Willebrands disease, and Hereditary Hemorrhagic Telangiectasia
- Trauma - usually bleeding after a nasal fracture stops quickly, but some nosebleeds will not stop without medical intervention
- Tumor - most rare cause

How Should I Stop a Nosebleed?

Pinch your nostrils (soft part) and hold pressure for at least 10 minutes. Be sure to use a clock and do not release pressure even once, as this will be less successful. Keep your head elevated and lean slightly forward, so you can spit out any blood which drips into your mouth. Swallowing blood will cause nausea and vomiting. Use of Afrin or Neosynephrine spray for 2-3 days after stopping the bleeding can prevent the nose from bleeding again. Consult your doctor prior to the use of these sprays if you have high blood pressure.

How to Prevent Nosebleeds from Reoccurring

- Avoid picking, blowing, rubbing
- Keep head elevated; may use extra pillows in bed
- Use an air humidifier in the bedroom
- Use over-the-counter nasal saline sprays multiple times per day, or use a saline gel, to keep the lining moisturized
- Avoid straining, heavy lifting and strenuous activity- usually for 10 days after a nose bleed
- If you are on prescription blood-thinners check with your primary care doctor to be sure you still need the medication, and be sure to have your blood tested regularly if recommended by your doctor

When Should I See a Doctor?

- If you cannot stop a nosebleed at home by yourself as previously described.
- If you have a new nasal fracture.
- If you have frequent nosebleeds

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