UW Medicine

Nosebleeds

How to prevent and stop them

This handout explains what to do when a nosebleed starts, and how to keep them from occurring.

When a Nosebleed Starts

If you have a nosebleed, sit still and lean slightly forward.

- Use Afrin nose spray.
- Then use a finger and thumb to gently pinch together your *nostrils* (the soft parts of your nose). Keep pinching for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Sit still and lean slightly forward. Dab your nose with tissue as needed.
- If your nose is still bleeding after 5 to 10 minutes, use Afrin again. Then pinch your nostrils for another 5 to 10 minutes.
- Once the bleeding stops, spray with Afrin again. Repeat every 8 hours for 24 hours.
- Do **not** use Afrin for more than 3 days in a row.
- If you are having 1 or more nosebleeds every day, or if it is hard to stop the bleeding when you do have them, call 206.598.4022 and ask to talk with a nurse.
- If bleeding will not stop, go to the emergency room or call 911.

To Help Prevent Nosebleeds

- Apply a small amount of Bacitracin or Vaseline ointment inside your nostrils every evening before you go to bed.
- Use saline spray in each nostril 4 to 10 times a day. You can buy saline spray at a drugstore without a prescription. Using this spray will help keep the inside of your nose moist and help prevent more nosebleeds. Wait 1 day after having a nosebleed before using saline spray.

Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery Center | Box 356161
1959 N.E. Pacific St., Seattle, WA 98195 | 206.598.4022

To Learn More About Nosebleeds

Visit the ENT Health website by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery:

www.enthealth.org/conditions/nosebleeds/

- If your nose still feels dry, also use a saline gel spray such as Nasogel to help coat the inside of your nose. This will help keep your nasal tissue from drying and cracking.
- Keep your blood pressure in the normal range, as directed by your primary care provider.
- Avoid blowing your nose. Instead, rinse your nose with saline spray to clear congestion.
- Do **not** put your finger or other objects in your nose. This can damage your nasal tissue.
- When you sneeze, keep your mouth open to lessen pressure on your nose.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

For questions or concerns:

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call Otoloaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery Center at 206.598.4022 and press 2.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call 206.598.4022 and press 2 to talk with a Community Care Line Nurse.

For appointment questions: Call Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery Center: 206.598.4022.

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