

## Southwest Ear, Nose & Throat

Head & Neck Surgery

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Allergy & Sinus

Hearing & Otology

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## Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds, also called epistaxis (ep-ih-STAK-seez), involve bleeding from the inside of your nose. Many people have occasional nosebleeds, particularly younger children and older adults.

Although nosebleeds may be scary, they're generally only a minor annoyance and aren't dangerous. Frequent nosebleeds are those that occur more than once a week.

### Self-care steps for occasional active nosebleeds include:

- **Sit upright and lean forward.** By remaining upright, you reduce blood pressure in the veins of your nose. This discourages further bleeding. Sitting forward will help you avoid swallowing blood, which can irritate your stomach.
- **Gently blow your nose** to clear out any clotted blood. Spray a nasal decongestant such as Afrin on a cotton ball and place in the affected nostril.
- **Pinch your nose.** Use your thumb and index finger to pinch both nostrils shut, even if only one side is bleeding. Breathe through your mouth. Continue to pinch for 10 to 15 minutes. This maneuver puts pressure on the bleeding point on the nasal septum and often stops the flow of blood.
- **Repeat.** If the bleeding doesn't stop, repeat these steps for up to a total of 15 minutes.

After the bleeding has stopped, to keep it from starting again, don't pick or blow your nose and don't bend down for several hours. Keep your head higher than the level of your heart.

### Tips to help prevent nosebleeds include:

- **Keeping the lining of the nose moist.** Especially during colder months when air is dry, apply a thin, light coating of KY Jelly or saline gel with a cotton swab three times a day. Saline nasal spray also can help moisten dry nasal membranes. Ponaris nasal emollient or sesame oil also prevent dryness. Use 2 drops in each nostril in the morning. Place head back, then forward to mix the lubricant throughout the nose and sinuses.
- **Trimming your child's fingernails.** Keeping fingernails short helps discourage nose picking.  
**Using a humidifier.** A humidifier will counteract the effects of dry air by adding moisture to the air.