



جامعة الإمام عبد الرحمن بن فيصل
IMAM ABDULRAHMAN BIN FAISAL UNIVERSITY

مستشفى الملك فهد الجامعي
King Fahad Hospital The University

Nosebleeds (epistaxis)

What is nosebleeds (epistaxis) ?



Nosebleeds or epistaxis is one of the most common forms of **bleeding**, and its severity varies from simple, medium, or severe bleeding. Sometimes it is caused by a disease that leads to **decrease coagulation affect**, and often it is due to the superficiality of the capillaries that line the nose from the inside.



Types of nosebleeds divided into two categories:

- **Anterior nosebleed:** It is considered the most common, as it originates from the **front of the nose**, and causes blood to flow through its nostrils, and this type is usually **not dangerous**.
- **Posterior nosebleeds:** Less common and originating from the **back of the nose** (near the throat), it is **more dangerous** as it can cause huge blood loss.





What are the Causes of epistaxis?

- Exposure to cold or dry air.
- The presence of **allergic rhinitis**, or **other rhinitis**.
- **Direct injury** to the face or nose, such as: falling or hitting a ball.
- Continuous use of steroid nasal sprays, used to **treat allergies** or **nasal congestion**.
- Occurs as a side effect of some medications that **reduce the blood's ability to clot**, such as: aspirin and warfarin.
- The presence of disorders and diseases that cause bleeding, vascular abnormalities, or a tumor in the nose.



Note: In some cases, frequent nosebleeds can be a sign of a disease that causes bleeding, and there are often other symptoms, such as: frequent bruising in different areas of the body, as well as more bleeding than expected, especially if the injury is minor.





How to deal with epistaxis at home?

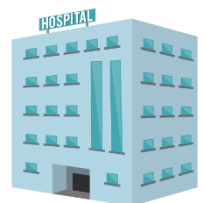
- Bending **forward** while sitting or standing, while continuing to **press on the nose** (the soft part of it, not the bony part), while **avoiding lying** down or **tilting the head back**; Because that will cause swallowing blood, and vomiting.
- Pressure on the nose for at least **five minutes** for children, and **10 to 15 minutes** for adults.
- Avoid decompressing the nose; To discover if the bleeding has stopped, only after the specified time has passed.
- **Cold compresses** or an ice bag can be placed on the nose, which helps the blood vessels to contract.
- Repeat the previous steps if the bleeding does not stop, with pressure on the nose for a period of not less than **30 minutes**. If the bleeding does not stop, **you should go to the emergency room immediately**.





When do you have to go to the hospital?

- If the bleeding occurs **profusely**, which leads to difficulty in breathing.
- If the bleeding is accompanied by a **pale color**, or a **feeling of fatigue**.
- If the **bleeding does not stop** even after first aid.
- If the bleeding occurred **after surgery** close to the nose, or if the patient had a nasal polyp.
- If the bleeding occurred after a facial injury.
- If the injured person is **taking anticoagulant medications**, such as: warfarin, aspirin, etc.
- If epistaxis occur repeatedly, or accompanied by bruises on the body, or bleeding from other places, and the current bleeding does not stop.



Sources and references:

All pictures used from Canva.com

Review and audit:

The content of this booklet has been reviewed by consultants of hematologists at King Fahd University Hospital.

Department of Hematology

Health Awareness Unit

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