

How long will I be off work?

You may need to rest at home for at least 1 week. If you are admitted to hospital, tell your nurse if you require a sickness certificate on discharge.

Will I need any medicines?

You may be given an antiseptic cream that your nurse will show you how to use.

Will I be seen in the out-patient clinic?

It may not be necessary for you to be seen again in the out-patient clinic. However the doctor may arrange a further appointment, particularly if any of your medications have been altered.

After you leave hospital

If you have any problems please call the number below for advice:

Where to get further information

NHS Direct: <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/>

© Royal National Ear Nose & Throat Hospital /
Patient information programme 2007
www.royalfree.nhs.uk

About nosebleeds (epistaxis)

What is epistaxis (nosebleed)?

Epistaxis is bleeding from the nose because of broken blood vessels at the front or back of the nostrils. It is usually mild and easily treated. If bleeding is more severe, it is usually in older people or in people with other medical problems.

Why has it happened?

It is not always possible to give a definite reason.

- The common site for a nosebleed to start is in Little's area. This is just inside the entrance of the nostril, on the nasal septum (the middle harder part of the nostril). Here the blood vessels are quite fragile and can rupture easily for no apparent reason. This happens most commonly in children. This delicate area is also more likely to bleed with the following:
 - Picking the nose
 - Colds, and blocked stuffy noses such as hay fever
 - Blowing the nose
 - Minor injuries to the nose
 - Changes in temperature

In the above situations, the bleeding tends to last only a short time and is usually easy to control.

- Bleeding sometimes comes from other areas further back in the nose. It is sometimes due to uncommon disorders of the nose, or to serious injuries to the nose.
- The bleeding may be more prolonged and harder to stop if you have: high blood pressure; heart failure; a blood clotting disorder; or are taking 'blood thinning' drugs (anticoagulants) such as warfarin or aspirin.

General advice following a nosebleed

We cannot guarantee that your nose will never bleed again.

- When you go home make sure you get plenty of rest. Avoid lifting, strenuous exercise, constipation and stressful situations, as they can cause your blood pressure to rise and increase the chances of a nosebleed.
- Do not blow, pick or attempt to clean the inside of your nose. The crusting discomfort you may feel is part of the healing process, and if you remove the crusts, you may infect the area or cause another nosebleed.
- Try to avoid sneezing; but if necessary, sneeze with your mouth open. This is not easy, but will stop sudden pressure within your nose.
- Alcohol, smoking and very hot drinks expand the blood vessels in your nasal lining. Therefore they are best avoided for at least a week after the bleeding has stopped.
- Stay away from crowded, smoky places and, if possible, from people who have coughs or colds as your nose is susceptible to infection and irritation while it is healing.
- You may have dark red or brown discharge from your nose. This is usual and is nature's way of clearing the nose.

Will I have to stay in hospital?

If the doctor can see where the bleeding is coming from and stops the bleeding by cauterising the bleeding point, you will be allowed home. Cauterising is carried out by placing a stick with a cotton bud sized end of silver nitrate, which seals the bleeding point; this may sting for a moment. It can also be carried out using a low-level heat source to seal the bleeding point.

If this is not successful, it will be necessary to admit you for further treatment.

What happens if I need further treatment?

Your nose may require packing, with a sponge or a ribbon dressing, to stop the bleeding or if severe with an epistaxis balloon. The packing will completely block your nose and you will need to breath through your mouth. If your nose is packed, this will remain in place for 24-48 hours.

During this time it is important that you relax in bed until the doctor gives permission for you to get up. While in hospital you will have investigations to monitor your condition.

During this time you may experience the following:

- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Loss of appetite and taste
- Difficulty in swallowing
- Watery eyes

These symptoms are usual with a blocked nose and your nurse will be able to help alleviate them.

In the rare event that packing your nose does not stop the bleeding, you may need a short operation to reduce the blood supply to your nose.

What do I do if my nose bleeds again at home?

- Try to keep as calm as possible.
- Sit upright with your head tipped forward over a bowl or sink. Spit out any blood as swallowing this may make you feel sick.
- Pinch the fleshy part of your nose for 10 minutes without releasing the pressure.
- A cold compress on the top of the nose or sucking ice may help you.
- If your nose is still bleeding after 20 minutes, go to your nearest casualty department as soon as possible.