



*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

## Helping Hand™

### Nosebleeds

Most nosebleeds are a nuisance, but they can be frightening. Bleeding from the nose can happen easily because the blood vessels and tissues of the nose are very delicate.

#### What causes nosebleeds

Many small and delicate blood vessels (capillaries) are in the lining of the nose. These can break and bleed easily.

- Home heating systems may dry the air in your home. This may dry the lining of the nose and cause bleeding.
- If your nose is hit or if it is scratched inside, the vessels may break and cause your nose to bleed. The most common cause is “picking” the nose.
- If a blood vessel inside your child’s nose is very close to the surface, blowing the nose too hard or picking the nose may make it bleed. Frequent nosebleeds within a few days are usually from the same spot where the clot has formed and is then pulled off.
- A child with frequent colds or allergies may rub the nose often which can cause the vessels to break and bleed.



**Picture 1** Hold the nostrils closed for 5 minutes.

#### How to stop a nosebleed

Here are a few things you can do to stop a nosebleed. If these do not stop your child’s nosebleed, call your doctor for advice.

- **Your child should sit up and lean his or her head forward slightly (Picture 1). Do not let the child lie down or lean back.**
- Try to be quiet and calm and keep your child calm. Talking, laughing or crying may cause more bleeding.
- Have your child hold his or her nostrils tightly closed with the thumb and forefinger at the soft part of the nose just below the nasal bone, and breathe through the mouth (Picture 1).

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## How to stop a nosebleed, continued

- You or your child should hold the nostrils closed for 5 minutes. Time this with a clock or watch. If the bleeding has not stopped after a full 5 minutes, hold the nostrils closed again for 5 more minutes.
- If bleeding does not stop after the second 5 minutes of pinching the nostrils, call your child's doctor.
- Wet a washcloth or hand towel with cool water. Wring it out and press firmly to the nose and cheeks.
- Do not blow your nose or remove crusts for several hours. If your child needs to blow his or her nose, remind him to do it **very gently**. Either blowing or wiping the nose may cause fresh bleeding.
- If any blood collects in your child's mouth, have him spit it out. Swallowing a large amount of blood may cause your child to vomit blood or blood clots.
- Sometimes if the bleeding is frequent, your child's doctor may recommend nasal cauterization. This is when the vessel is sealed with silver nitrate, electric current or laser to stop the bleeding. This can be done in the doctor's office or the Operating Room.

## How to help prevent nosebleeds

- Fingernails should be cut short to prevent scratching the inside of the nose.
- Apply a **very thin** coating of Vaseline<sup>®</sup> inside each nostril once a day for 2 weeks during the dry season. This will keep the lining of the nose moist.
- Use a cool vaporizer in your child's bedroom at night, especially during the winter. Be sure to keep the vaporizer clean.
- Be sure your child blows his or her nose gently.

## More about nosebleeds

- Usually, nosebleeds do not cause enough blood loss to be serious in children who are otherwise healthy.
- If your child takes aspirin or uses nasal sprays for allergies or any anticoagulant (anti-clotting) medicine, be sure to tell the doctor how often the nosebleeds happen.

## Call your child's doctor if:

- You cannot stop the bleeding after 10 minutes of pressure.
- Your child has a nosebleed after an accident or being hit in the face.
- Your child has a clotting disorder and you cannot stop the nosebleeds.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your child's doctor or nurse.