

Nosebleeds

Information for patients



Nosebleeds are a common occurrence and most settle with little or no treatment. However, nosebleeds can start again or may keep happening. This advice is designed to help you reduce the chance of this occurring. It also tells you what to do if it does.

Many things can cause nosebleeds, including such things as minor injuries to the nose and even the common cold. Most of the time a nosebleed does not need investigation, however we will normally check your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse rate, etc.), and may do some blood tests as part of your assessment in the Emergency Department.

Preventing further nosebleeds

These tips may help you to avoid your nosebleed returning after you leave hospital:

1. Avoid having hot drinks for 48 hours.
2. Don't take hot showers or baths – warm is fine. Hot water dilates the blood vessels in your nose, which can make your nose bleed.
3. Avoid injury to or knocking your nose.
4. If you need to sneeze try to let the air out through your mouth.
5. Do not smoke, as this affects the inside of your nose, making it more likely to bleed.
6. Avoid alcohol as this thins your blood and makes you more likely to start bleeding again.
7. Avoid strenuous exercise as this puts pressure on the blood vessels in your nose and may cause it to start to bleed again.

What do I do if my nose starts to bleed again?

1. Apply firm but gentle pressure on the fleshy part of the outside of your nose.
2. Sit forward with a bowl under your nose.
3. Do not swallow the blood as this may make you feel sick or vomit – spit it into the bowl.
4. Continue applying pressure for 5-10 minutes – use a clock to time yourself.
5. When the bleeding has stopped, place a small cool, damp towel over the bridge of your nose. This helps the blood vessels to contract (shrink) and stop bleeding.

IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO STOP THE BLEEDING AFTER 20 MINUTES, THEN YOU SHOULD COME BACK TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.

If you need to return to hospital with another nosebleed that needs medical treatment, we may refer you to the Ear, Nose and Throat department. If you find you are having lots of minor nosebleeds we will recommend that you see your GP. They will be able to refer you to the Ear, Nose and Throat department for further investigations, if needed.

How to contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Emergency Department
John Radcliffe Hospital

Tel: **01865 220 224**

Emergency Department
Horton General Hospital

Tel: **01295 229 412**

Alternatively you can contact your GP or NHS 111 (Freephone), for advice.

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

Emergency Department
January 2015
Review January 2018
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information

