



Epistaxis (Nose bleeds)

Patient information Leaflet

June 2020

What is epistaxis?

Epistaxis or nose bleeds are relatively common but are rarely something to worry about. Nosebleeds commonly start just inside the entrance of the nostril on the central harder part that separates the nostrils (the nasal septum). The blood vessels here 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 with hay fever.
- Blowing the nose.
- Minor injuries to the nose.
- Allergies, infections, high blood pressure

How is epistaxis managed?

For most nosebleeds, simple first aid can usually stop the bleeding.

- Sit up and lean slightly forward.
- With a finger and thumb, pinch the lower fleshy end of the nose completely blocking the nostrils. Applying pressure over the roof of the nose or nasal bones doesn't work. Usually, if you apply light pressure for 10-20 minutes, the bleeding will stop.
- If available, a cold flannel or compress around the nose and front of face will help. The cold helps the blood vessels to close down and stop bleeding.
- Once the nosebleed has stopped, do not pick the nose or try to blow out any of the blood remaining in the nostrils. This may cause another nosebleed.
- If you feel faint it is best to lie flat on your side.

Get medical help quickly if bleeding is heavy, or it does not stop within 20-30 minutes. Sometimes, to stop the bleeding, the nose needs to be packed by a doctor.

Children who suffer from recurrent nose bleeds should be referred by their GP to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist for further treatment.

What will happen at the consultation with the ENT specialist?

The doctor will examine the nasal cavity using an illuminated nasal speculum or otoscope. In most cases the source of the bleeding is visible. Where appropriate, a cream that can be applied to the nostrils may be prescribed. Alternatively, cauterisation may be considered.

What is nasal cautery?

Nasal cautery is a common treatment for nose bleeds. It is performed to stop bleeding and to prevent reoccurrence. The doctor can use chemical cautery (such as silver nitrate) with your child awake and this can be performed in clinic under local anaesthetic spray. If your child can not tolerate this, it can be done as a short operation under general anaesthetic (with your child asleep) using either chemical cautery or electrocautery. This decision will be discussed at your clinic appointment.

Before your child's operation

If your child is unwell the week before their operation with a cough, cold or sore throat you should inform your Consultants secretary. It will be safer to postpone the operation for a few weeks.

You and your child will be asked to attend a preoperative assessment clinic a week before the operation. Here you will see a nurse who will ask you about your child's medical and surgical history and will be able to answer any questions you may have. You will then talk to a play specialist who will conduct a pre-operative talk. This includes how your child will go to sleep and starving instructions.

How is the operation performed?

Your child will be asleep. The nose is cauterised using either a silver nitrate stick or electro cautery. This usually takes about 20 minutes. Your child will then go to the recovery room to be carefully observed until they wake up from the anaesthetic. It will take about 1 hour in total.

How long will my child stay in hospital?

The procedure is performed as a day case so that your child can go home on the same day as the operation. Your child will be able to go home when they are eating, drinking and feels well enough.

Sometimes, for other medical reasons, your child may have to stay overnight but the ENT doctors will discuss this with you.

Care after the operation

Your child may have some discomfort. Give paracetamol if required. Please follow the instructions on the label and do not exceed the recommended dose.

Try not to let your child pick, rub or blow their nose for at least a week.

If you are prescribed a cream for the nose; apply as instructed. This is to prevent infection.

Your child will need 2-3 days off school to recover from surgery and should avoid boisterous play for 2 weeks.

If your child's nose bleeds after surgery, pinch just below the nasal bone whilst keeping the head forward. If the bleeding lasts longer than 15 minutes or is more than just a trickle, ring the ward or go to your nearest A&E department.

Useful Contact Numbers:

- Children's Unit 0161 922 5252 (24 hrs)
- Go to Doc (GP service) 0161 785 0805 (out of hours)
- NHS Direct 101 (24hr helpline)
- You can also contact your GP for advice.

Useful Websites/information:

- Department of Health (www.dh.gov.uk)
- NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk/conditions)
- NHS institute for innovation and improvement (www.institute.nhs.uk)

- NHS Improvement (www.improvement.nhs.uk)

References

Corbridge RJ (1998) Essential ENT Practice. A Clinical Text

Leong S (2011) Paediatric Medicine – Managing Epistaxis in Children. www.gponline.com

Nasal Cautery – www.patient.co.uk

<https://patient.info/ears-nose-throat-mouth/nosebleed-epistaxis-leaflet> accessed February 2020

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you require an interpreter, please ask an appropriate person to contact our central booking office between Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm on 0161 922 6991 to arrange this for you.

語言翻譯及病者支持服務 (LIPS):

如果閣下需要翻譯員在您的預約當日幫助您的話 請找一名合適的家庭成員 0161 922 6991 聯絡本中央預約辦事處來您您安排 我們的辦公時間是星期一至星期五 上午 8 時至下午 5 時

Językowo Tłumaczeniowa Usługa Pomocy dla Pacjenta (*Language, Interpretation and Patient Support Service* LIPS):

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy tłumacza w trakcie swojej wizyty, proszę poprosić odpowiedniego członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z Centralnym Biurem Zamówień (*Central Booking Office*), w celu zorganizowania tłumacza pomiędzy poniedziałkiem a piątkiem w godzinach od 08:00 - 17:00 pod numerem 0161 922 6991.

لینگویج، انٹرپریٹیشن اینڈ پیسٹنٹ سپورٹ سروس (Lips)

اگر آپ کو اپنی اپائنٹمنٹ کے لئے مترجم کی مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی اپنے خاندان کے کسی موزوں فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہمارے سنٹرل بنگ آفس سے پیر سے جمعہ 8.00 بجے صبح سے 5.00 بجے شام کے دوران 0161 922 6991 پر فون کر کے اس کا بندوبست کریں۔

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