



RECURRENT EPISTAXIS (NOSE BLEEDS)

Nose bleeds are very common in children. There are several reasons why children suffer nose bleeds. Often it is a combination of factors. These include :

- ✓ Trauma to the nose (rubbing or picking the nose)
- ✓ Dry nasal mucosa (associated with hot dry weather, or drying effect of watery nasal discharge)
- ✓ Inflammation in the nose ("colds" or hayfever)
- ✓ Very rarely are nose bleeds a reflection of an underlying problem with the body's ability to form blood clots

It is rare for nose bleeds to cause anemia or low iron.

Nose bleeds occur in clusters. Once a child has one nosebleed, the usual pattern is to progress to have recurrent nose bleeds for up to 1-2 weeks. This is because the "scratch or "scab" in the nose needs to completely heal for the nose bleeds to cease.



PREVENTION

Nasal Moisturizers

Nose bleeds can be minimized by reducing dryness of the "skin" of the internal nose. This done by using nasal moisturizers such as "Nozoil". This is available over the counter and can be a drop or a spray. These can be used 1-2 times per day. They are especially beneficial during dry hot summer days. Other nasal moisturizers include antibiotic ointments such as "Chlorsig Ointment". Chlorsig ointment is recommended if a cluster of nose bleeds has occurred. They can be used 1-2 times per day for 1-2 weeks.

Avoid Nasal Trauma and Itch

Avoid trauma to the nose. This is hard to achieve in children for obvious reasons. However, it is important to reduce nasal itch associated with hayfever.

Hayfever associated nasal itch is best managed by reducing exposure to known allergens, oral antihistamines and a nasal saline spray.

Often children with allergic rhinitis suffer nasal congestion. This is best treated with nasal steroid sprays, however steroid sprays can may cause more nose bleeds.

If steroid sprays are needed, trial the spray. If nose bleeds occur, stop the spray for 2 weeks and restart. If nose bleeds keep recurring then nasal steroid sprays are best avoided in those patients.

Humidification

Children who have nose bleeds in their sleep, may benefit from a humidifier in their bedroom. This minimizes how dry the nose may become at night (esp if heating or cooling is on).

Nasal Cautery

Nasal cautery is a procedure which reduces the frequency of nose bleeds for a period of time (generally around 6 months). In younger children (less than 6 years) it requires a general anaesthetic. For older children, it can usually be performed under local anaesthesia in a GP or ENT consulting rooms. Nasal cautery improves the nose bleeds for a period of time, however inevitably the nose bleeds return. It is useful when the nose bleeds are escalating in frequency and are having a significant impact on the child's quality of life





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TREATMENT OF A NOSE BLEED



DURING AN ACTIVE NOSE BLEED

- ✓ Squeeze the tip of the nose (soft part).
- ✓ Lean the nose forward and down (so the blood comes out of the nose).
- ✓ Try to calm down the child (anxiety will increase the heart rate and blood pressure and make the bleeding worse).
- ✓ Cool down : if it is a hot day stay inside, a cool washer at the back of the neck, or suck on ice.
- ✓ If the nose bleed is continuous for 20-30 mins, go to the emergency department.

AFTER THE BLEEDING HAS STOPPED

- ✓ Avoid overheating or strenuous activity as this will activate further bleeding.
- ✓ Anticipate there will likely be further nose bleeds over the next few days and modify activities accordingly.
- ✓ Apply Chlorsig ointment twice a day into the nostril. Directly "squirt" the ointment into the nostril. Do this for 1-2 weeks or until the nose bleeds settle.
- ✓ Avoid blowing the nose for 1 week or until the nose bleeds have settled.
- ✓ Nasal decongestant spray may be used to reduce further bleeds in the coming days.

NASAL SPRAYS AND OINTMENTS

ALL AVAILABLE OVER THE COUNTER

SALINE SPRAY

Helps loosen mucous and allow the child to blow nose; often used in allergic rhinitis.

CHLORSIG OINTMENT

Antibiotic ointment; used when nose bleeds are occurring frequently instead of nozoil; use 1-2 times per day for up to 2 weeks.

NASAL DECONGESTANT SPRAY

Reduces swelling in the nose, and can reduce nose bleeds for a up to 12 hours. Nasal decongestants are addictive and should not be used for more than 5 days in a row.

NOZOIL

A drop or spray oil for the nose; moisturizes the nasal mucosa or "skin", reduces the drying and "cracking" of the nasal skin. Nozoil is useful for prevention of nose bleeds.

NASAL STEROID SPRAY

Used for congestion associated with allergic rhinitis; side effect is nose bleeds; if nose bleeds occurs, stop using nasal steroid spray for 2 weeks and restart. If this keeps occurring, then avoid nasal steroid sprays.

