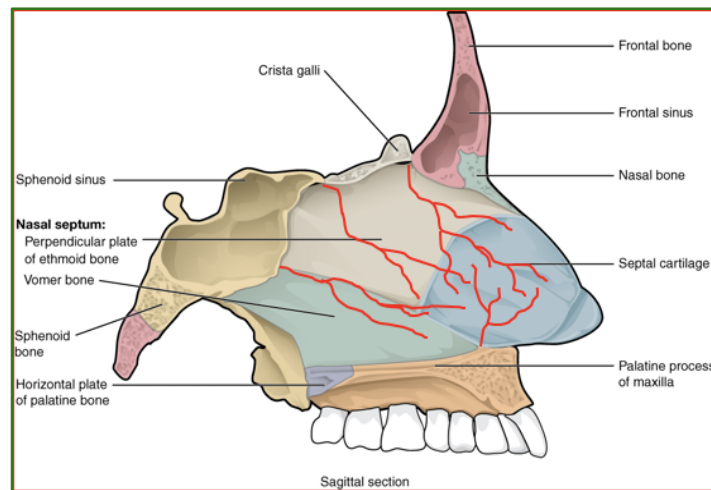*Carolina Pines ENT*

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NOSE BLEEDS (EPISTAXIS)

The following has been adapted from the American Academy of Otolaryngology website. The full articles may be found here: https://www.enthealth.org/conditions/nosebleeds/

Nosebleeds (called epistaxis) are caused when tiny blood vessels in the nose break. Nosebleeds are very common and affect many people at some point in their lives.

In the United States, about 60 percent of people will experience a nosebleed in their lifetime. They can happen at any age, but are most common in children around the ages of two to 10, and adults around the ages of 50 to 80.

What Causes a Nosebleed?

Most nosebleeds are in the front part of the nose and start on the nasal septum, the wall that separates the two sides of the nose. The septum contains blood vessels that can be easily damaged. Irritation from blowing the nose or scraping with the edge of a sharp fingernail is enough to tear the vessels and cause a nose bleed. Anterior nosebleeds are also common in dry climates, or during winter months when dry, heated indoor air dehydrates the nasal membranes and makes the blood vessels more likely to rupture.

Causes of recurring or frequent nosebleeds may include:

- Allergies, infections, or dryness that cause itching and lead to picking the nose

- Vigorous nose blowing that ruptures superficial blood vessels

- Problems with bleeding caused by genetic or inherited clotting disorders (e.g., hemophilia or vonWillebrand's disease)

- Medications that prevent blood clotting (e.g., anticoagulants like coumadin/warfarin, XARELTO®, or anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen or aspirin)

- Fractures of the nose or the base of the skull (a nosebleed occurring after a head injury should raise suspicion of serious concern)

- Hereditary hemorrhagic telangiectasia, a disorder involving birthmark-like blood vessel growths inside the nose

- While much more rare, tumors, both malignant (cancerous) and nonmalignant (benign), must be considered, particularly in older patients or smokers

Follow these steps to stop a nosebleed:

1. Stay calm, or help a young child stay calm. A person who is agitated may bleed more profusely than someone who feels reassured and supported.

2. Sit up and keep the head higher than the level of the heart.

3. Lean forward slightly so the blood doesn't drain into the back of the throat.

4. *Gently* blow any clotted blood out of the nose. Spray the nose with a nasal decongestant; oxymetazoline is the active ingredient in most over-the-counter sprays.

5. Using the thumb and index finger, pinch all the soft parts of the nose.

6. Hold the position for five minutes. If it's still bleeding, hold it again for an additional 10 minutes.

What Are Some Tips for Preventing a Nosebleed?

Some tips you can follow to help prevent future nosebleeds include:

- Keep the lining of your nose moist by gently applying a light coating of saline gel, petroleum jelly, or an antibiotic ointment with a cotton swab three times daily, including at bedtime. Common products include Ayr® Saline Nasal Gel, Bacitracin, A and D Ointment, Eucerin®, Polysporin®, and Vaseline®.

- Keep children's fingernails short to discourage nose picking.

- Counteract the effects of dry air by using a humidifier.

- Use a saline nasal spray to moisten dry nasal membranes.

- Quit smoking. Smoking dries out the nose and irritates it.

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- Do not pick or blow your nose after the initial bleeding has stopped.

- Do not strain or bend down to lift anything heavy after initial bleeding has stopped.

- Keep your head higher than your heart after initial bleeding has stopped.

- Call your doctor if bleeding persists after 30 minutes, or if a nosebleed occurs after an injury to your head.

**** ADD MY POST-CAUTERY INSTRUCTIONS