



# MIDDLEBORO PEDIATRICS

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## NOSEBLEEDS

### What causes nosebleeds?

Nosebleeds are usually caused by dryness of the nasal lining and the normal rubbing and picking that all children do when their noses are blocked or itchy. Vigorous nose blowing can also cause bleeding. Children who have nasal allergies are more likely to have nosebleeds because they rub and blow their noses more. Being hit in the nose or other injuries may also cause nosebleeds. Nosebleeds are very common throughout childhood.

### How can I help stop the bleeding?

Have your child sit up, lean forward, and spit out any blood. Have a basin available so he can spit out any blood that drains into his throat. Swallowed blood is irritating to the stomach. Don't be surprised if it is vomited up.

Have your child blow his nose to free any large clots. Then tightly pinch the soft part of the lower nose between your thumb and forefinger for 10 minutes. (If your child is old enough, teach him how and where to hold his own nose.) Have your child breathe through his mouth. Don't release the pressure until 10 minutes are up. If the bleeding continues, you may not be pressing on the right spot.

If bleeding continues, insert a gauze covered with decongestant nose drops (for example, Neo-Synephrine) or petroleum jelly (Vaseline) into the nostril. Squeeze again for 10 minutes. Leave the gauze in for another 10 minutes before you remove it. If bleeding continues, call your child's healthcare provider but continue the pressure in the meantime.

### Common mistakes in treating nosebleed

A cold washcloth applied to the forehead, bridge of the nose, back of the neck, or under the upper lip does not help stop nosebleeds.

Pressing on the bony part of the nose does not help stop nosebleeds.

### How can I help prevent nosebleeds?

A small amount of petroleum jelly applied twice a day to the center wall inside the nose (the septum) often helps relieve dryness and irritation.

Increasing the humidity in the room at night by using a humidifier may also be helpful.

Get your child into the habit of putting 2 or 3 drops of warm water in each nostril before blowing a stuffy nose.

If your child has nasal allergies, treating allergic symptoms with antihistamines will help break the itching-bleeding cycle.

Do not allow anyone to smoke around children.

**When should I call my child's healthcare provider?**

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

The bleeding does not stop after 20 minutes of direct pressure on the nose.

Call during office hours if:

Nosebleeds are a frequent problem even after petroleum jelly and humidification are used.

Your child bruises very easily.

Cuts take a long time to stop bleeding.

You have other concerns or questions.

Modified from a handout written by B.D. Schmitt, M.D.