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### **EPISTAXIS (NOSE BLEEDS)**

Nosebleeds can occur for a variety of reasons, but a spontaneous nosebleed is not a worrisome issue, just bothersome. Irritated mucosa (tissue lining the nasal cavity/sinuses) is the general cause of such bleeding. Do not worry about cancer or other dangerous possibilities, just treat the bleeding and that is all the attention that is required.

#### **If your nose should start bleeding:**

- Sit down and gently squeeze the soft portion of the nose between your thumb and finger (so that the nostrils are closed) for 5-10 minutes. Lean forward to avoid swallowing the blood and breathe through your mouth. Wait at least 5 minutes before checking if the bleeding has stopped. Almost all nose bleeds can be controlled in this.
- You can place a cotton ball in your nostril after soaking it in a topical decongestant spray (i.e. Afrin) or you can just spray Afrin in the nostril that is bleeding
- It may help to apply cold compresses or ice across the bridge of the nose.
- If the bleeding continues for more than 30 minutes, despite the above efforts, it is best to be seen in the Emergency Room or at the ENT physicians office

#### **General tips for after a nosebleed:**

- Avoid nose blowing (sneeze with your mouth open)
- Avoid picking or putting fingers in your nose.
- Stop taking intranasal medications
- Take it easy; elevated blood pressure can make nose bleeds worse (but is generally not the cause of a nose bleed)
- Avoid aspirin or medications containing aspirin. This thins out the blood and a single aspirin can thin the blood for up to a week
- Avoid blood thinners of all types (Coumadin, Plavix, Pradaxa, Xarelto)
- Avoid smoking as this irritates the nasal surfaces
- Moisturize the nostril(s) afterward with Bacitracin Ointment, Vaseline, or Ponares nose moisturizer (available at the local Compounding Pharmacies—Civic Center Pharmacy, Avella Pharmacy)

**If seen by the E.R. or ENT physician and your nose was cauterized and no packing was placed at your visit:**

- Apply antibiotic ointment (i.e. Bacitracin, Bactroban, etc.) to your nasal cavity, three times a day. This can be accomplished with a Q-tip or by filling your nostril with the ointment and then massaging the soft part of your nose.

**If seen by the E.R. or ENT physician and you have packing in your nose after your visit:**

- It is important to spray saline spray in your nose at least 3 times a day (Ocean Spray, Ayr's, or similar over-the-counter product)
- Do not remove the packing.
- Take antibiotics if prescribed.