
Nosebleeds

Most nosebleeds are not serious and stop with firm pressure. The position of your head and fingers matters.

When to get urgent help

Go to A&E now if a nosebleed:

Continue pinching the soft part of your nose while you get help. Ask someone to take you. If no one can take you, or you feel too unwell to travel safely, call 999 for an ambulance. Bring your medicines with you.

- lasts longer than 10 to 15 minutes despite correct pressure
- seems excessive
- makes you swallow a large amount of blood or vomit
- started after a blow to your head
- makes you feel weak, dizzy or faint
- causes difficulty breathing

Start first aid now

- 1 Sit and lean forward.** Keep your mouth open and breathe through it. Spit out blood rather than swallowing it.
- 2 Pinch the soft part of your nose.** Use your thumb and finger just above the nostril openings, below the hard bony bridge.
- 3 Keep pinching for 10 to 15 minutes.** Do not let go to check. Use a timer if helpful.
- 4 Keep your head forward.** Do not lie down, tilt your head back, or put tissue or cotton wool into your nose.



1. Sit and lean forward. 2. Pinch the soft part. 3. Hold for 10 to 15 minutes.

Keep the pressure on continuously. Do not squeeze the hard bridge of the nose.

If it has not stopped after 10 to 15 minutes

Keep pinching the soft part and go to A&E now. Do not drive yourself.

After the bleeding stops

For at least 24 hours, try not to disturb the clot. Follow any longer precautions given after heavy bleeding, cautery or hospital treatment. Avoid:

- blowing or picking your nose, or picking any scab. If you need to sneeze, keep your mouth open
- hot drinks, alcohol, hot baths or hot showers, and smoking or smoky environments
- heavy lifting, strenuous exercise, straining on the toilet, or bending with your head down
- lying flat

What commonly causes a nosebleed?

Tiny blood vessels inside the nose can break easily. Common triggers include:

- picking your nose or blowing it too hard
- a dry or crusty nose, sometimes after a change in temperature
- a minor injury, cold, infection or irritation

Less often, a nosebleed is linked to a broken nose, a condition affecting blood clotting, or a medicine that reduces clotting. Sometimes no cause is found.

Contact CHG for advice

Use the CHG online contact route, or phone if you cannot use it, if:

- a child under 2 years old has a nosebleed
- you have regular or heavy nosebleeds
- you have symptoms of anaemia, such as a fast heartbeat, shortness of breath or skin that is paler than usual for you
- you have unusual bruising, bleed for a long time after small cuts, or have a known bleeding disorder

Medicines and preventing another nosebleed

Do not stop a prescribed medicine yourself

If you take a blood-thinning medicine, keep taking it unless a clinician tells you to change or stop it. Ask CHG or the clinician who prescribed it for advice.

Reducing the chance of another nosebleed

- Avoid picking your nose. Blow it gently when needed.
- Follow the instructions for nasal sprays and decongestants. Do not use them more often than directed.
- Ask a pharmacist or CHG about dryness, crusting, hay fever or repeated nosebleeds. A prescribed nasal cream may help some people.
- Tell a clinician before using a prescribed antiseptic nasal cream if you have a peanut, soya or neomycin allergy.

What may happen if you need medical care?

A clinician may examine your nose, check your blood pressure, review your medicines and ask about other bleeding. Blood tests may be needed after heavy or repeated bleeding, or if anaemia or a clotting problem is suspected.

If the bleeding point can be seen, it may be sealed with a chemical treatment called cautery. If bleeding continues, the nose may need to be packed in hospital. Repeated or difficult nosebleeds may need an ear, nose and throat (ENT) assessment.

How to contact CHG

For non-urgent medical advice, use the CHG appointments and online contact page. If you cannot use the online route, call 01285 653122 or 01285 653184.

[CHG appointments and online contact](https://cirencesterhealthgroup.co.uk/appointments/). For print users:
cirencesterhealthgroup.co.uk/appointments/

When CHG is closed, use NHS 111 for urgent medical help. Call 999 for a medical emergency.

The Avenue Surgery: 1 The Avenue, Cirencester, GL7 1EH.

St Peters Road Surgery: 1 St Peters Road, Cirencester, GL7 1RF.

If you need help reading this leaflet, another format, or want to report unclear information, please contact CHG.

Trusted further information

- [NHS: Nosebleed](https://nhs.uk/conditions/nosebleed/)
nhs.uk/conditions/nosebleed/
- [ENT UK: Nosebleeds \(epistaxis\)](https://entuk.org/patients/conditions/42/nosebleeds_epistaxis_update/)
entuk.org/patients/conditions/42/nosebleeds_epistaxis_update/