



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice for dealing with epistaxis (nosebleeds)

Information for patients

This leaflet is for patients who have epistaxis (nosebleeds). If you do not understand anything or have any other concerns, please speak to a member of staff.

Why did I have a nosebleed?

There are many reasons why you may have had a nosebleed (epistaxis).

It may be due to:

- The medication you have been taking e.g. aspirin (this can thin the blood) or warfarin.
- High blood pressure or a blood disorder.
- An infection in the nose, a weak blood vessel or trauma to the nose.

It is possible that you may have another nosebleed. This is because the vessels in the nose are weakened. It can take up to two weeks for these to be fully healed. If you take anti-coagulant therapy (e.g. Warfarin) your blood will need to be monitored closely.

To avoid another nosebleed, there are a number of things you can do:

- Do not blow your nose or pick off any crusts as this may dislodge some of the healing tissue. If you had been given an antibiotic cream, use as instructed by your doctor or nurse.
- Avoid hot drink and food, alcohol and hot steamy rooms (e.g. bathrooms and kitchens). We suggest you drink warm instead of hot drinks for the first 48 hours after surgery. Heat or taking hot fluids will dilate the blood vessels in your nose and increase the risk of bleeding.
- Try avoiding trauma to the nose that could start another nosebleed.

- Try to avoid sniffing or sneezing. If you do sneeze, try and sneeze with your mouth open to help lessen the pressure forced through your nose.
- Try to avoid strenuous activity, heavy lifting or bending over for two weeks as this may put pressure on the blood vessels in your nose and cause a nosebleed.
- If you smoke, please try to stop for at least one week, as smoking will increase the risk of you having a nosebleed.
- Try to avoid straining when going to the toilet (to open your bowels). If you have constipation, take plenty of fluids and roughage and get a prescription from your GP for a mild laxative.
- Avoid taking aspirin or any medication containing aspirin, unless this is prescribed by your doctor.

Returning to work

Depending on your job, you may need to take up to one week off work after you leave hospital. You may need a sick certificate for your employer so please ask your doctor or your nurse before you leave hospital.

Follow-up

We may not need to see you for a follow-up appointment but your doctor will advise you on this before you leave the ward.

If you do need a follow up, an appointment will be sent to your home address in the post. If you cannot keep this appointment, please telephone 0118 322 7139 to arrange another one.

What to do if you have a nosebleed

- Sit in upright, tilting your head slightly forward, allowing blood to drip down your nose rather than dripping to the back your throat.
- Spit out the blood and try not to swallow, as it will make you sick.
- Use a cloth or tissue to apply firm pressure to the fleshy part of your nose and use a clock to time yourself. Continue to apply pressure for 5-10 minutes.
- Suck an ice cube and apply an ice pack or a packet of frozen peas to the bridge of your nose.
- If you are unable to stop the bleeding after 10-15 minutes, please go to the Emergency Department (A&E).

We wish you a speedy recovery and hope this leaflet has been useful.

Contact us

- Dorrell Ward 0118 322 7172
- ENT outpatient department 0118 322 7139
- Appointments (CAT 1) 0118 322 7139

Visit the Trust website: visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

Dorrell Ward, September 2018
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