



Nose bleeds

Information for patients from Head and Neck

This leaflet has been produced to explain how a nose bleed can be managed, either in an outpatient setting or as an inpatient needing a hospital stay.

What are nose bleeds and what causes them?

Epistaxis (nose bleed) is common. The bleeding is usually minor but may be life-threatening. The most common cause of epistaxis in children and young adults is slight trauma or infection (for example a cold) and can be easily stopped. In middle age or elderly patients, the bleeding tends to come from far back in the nose and is more difficult to stop.

What treatments are available?

As you will be receiving emergency treatment for your nose bleed, your choice of care will be decided by the doctor on-call.

- If the bleeding point can be seen, it will be **cauterised** with a chemical stick or an electric probe placed directly on the bleeding vessel, which will seal it. This can cause some pain in your nose for a short time. You may be prescribed some cream to apply twice a day; the doctor will explain this if it is needed; or
- **Packing** may be placed inside your nose for at least 24 to 48 hours.

A sample of your blood will be sent to the laboratory to check your blood loss. A transfusion is rarely needed.

Will I have to stay in hospital?

During this time, you will be admitted to a ward and advised to rest on the bed. A relaxant in the form of a tablet or injection may be given to you. If no further bleeding occurs within the next 24 to 48 hours, the packs may then be removed and your nose examined again by your doctor. You could then probably go home after a few hours or the next day.



Are there any alternatives?

Not really. If you cannot accept the advice given by your doctor, you can only rest and pinch the soft part of your nose and hold an ice pack over your forehead until the bleeding stops, but it may happen several times.

What will happen during my stay in hospital?

Because your nose is packed, your mouth will feel very dry as you will have to mouth breathe. You will be offered mouthwashes and encouraged to drink plenty of cool fluids. You are advised to rest as much as possible.

If you bleed again, more packing will be inserted into your nose until the bleeding stops.

What will happen when I go home?

- **Do not place anything inside your nostrils** - even tissues - as this may cause infection.
- Do not blow your nose for one week.
- Use any cream given to you to put inside your nose, as instructed by your nurse or doctor.
- Slowly get back to carrying out your normal activities.
- Avoid getting constipated or straining by lifting heavy objects, gardening, or doing energetic sports for a week or two.
- Be aware that nasal obstructions and swelling could continue until your nose has completely healed; this might take some weeks.
- If you have persistent nose bleeds or pain, contact your GP or nearest Emergency Department immediately.

Further information

If you have any further questions, please telephone the Rotary Ward, William Harvey Hospital, Ashford on 01233 61 62 34.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.