Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds can be scary to the person having one and others seeing it. Because the blood vessels inside the nose lie close to the surface, they are easy to injure. Some things that can cause nosebleeds include:

- Dry or very cold air
- Picking the nose
- Blowing nose too hard
- An injury to the nose
- Colds or allergies
- Some nasal sprays
- High blood pressure
- Cocaine use
- Other medical conditions such as bleeding disorders

Sometimes the cause of nosebleeds cannot be determined. Most nose bleeds happen in the front part of the nose. Sometimes they occur at the back of the nose and the blood drips down the throat.

If you have a nose bleed:

1. Sit down and lean slightly forward – not back.
   - Keeping your nose above your heart will help slow the bleeding.
   - Lying forward will allow the blood to come out of your nose instead of going down the back of the throat.
2. Breathe in and out through your mouth.
3. Firmly pinch the soft part of your nose for a full 10 minutes.
   - It may help to apply cold compresses or ice across the bridge of the nose.
   - If your nose is still bleeding, do this for another 5 to 10 minutes.
   - Wait for at least 10 minutes before checking to see if the bleeding has stopped.

Seek medical care if:

- Your nose is still bleeding after 20 minutes.
- You think your nose may be broken.
- Your nose is bleeding in the back and dripping down your throat – this is harder to stop.
- You have nose bleeds often.

Treatments

Your doctor may need to pack your nose or insert an inflatable balloon into the nostril to put pressure on the site to stop the bleeding. Your doctor may cauterize the bleeding vessel with silver nitrate solution or with an electrical or heating device to stop the bleeding.

After a nose bleed, to prevent it from recurring:

- Do not bend over or blow your nose for a few hours after a nose bleed.
- Do not do any strenuous physical activity for 12 hours.
- Do not rub or pick at your nose.
- Raise your head with an extra pillow when lying down.
- Use a humidifier at night in your bedroom.
- Quit smoking. Smoking dries and irritates your nose.

Talk with your doctor about your questions or concerns.