

### Definition

Epistaxis is the medical term for **bleeding from the nose**. It is a common condition that can range from a small trickle to more significant bleeding.

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### Common Causes

- **Dry air / low humidity** – dries out nasal lining
  - **Illegal drugs** (cocaine)
  - **Nose picking or trauma** – scratching or injury to blood vessels
  - **Upper respiratory infections / allergies** – nasal inflammation and frequent blowing
  - **Irritants** – cigarette smoke, strong odors, chemicals
  - **Foreign bodies**
  - **Blowing the nose vigorously**
  - **Medications** – blood thinners (e.g., aspirin, warfarin), nasal sprays, antihistamines
  - **High blood pressure** – may contribute to persistent bleeding
  - **Structural issues** – deviated septum, nasal polyps
  - **Allergies**
  - **Less common causes** – clotting disorders, tumors (rare)
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### First Aid / Initial Treatment

1. **Stay calm and sit upright** – lean slightly forward (do not tilt head back).
  2. **Pinch the soft part of the nose** (just below the bony bridge) firmly for **10–15 minutes** without checking.
  3. **Apply a cold compress** to the nose or cheeks to help constrict blood vessels.
  4. **Spit out blood** if it collects in the mouth (to avoid nausea or vomiting).
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### When to Seek Medical Help

- Bleeding lasts longer than **20 minutes** despite pressure.
  - Nosebleeds occur **frequently or without clear cause**.
  - Associated with **significant blood loss, dizziness, fainting, or difficulty breathing**.
  - If on **blood-thinning medications** or with known bleeding disorders.
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### Ways to Stop uncontrolled Epistaxis

- Cauterization using agents such as silver nitrate, oxidized cellulose, nasal packs or balloons can be performed in the emergency room or in the office.
- More invasive procedures are available for cases of Epistaxis that cannot be controlled by the following these measures:
  - **Ligation** (surgically cutting of the blood supply) of one or more of the nasal vessels or **embolization** of some of the vessels may be warranted.

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