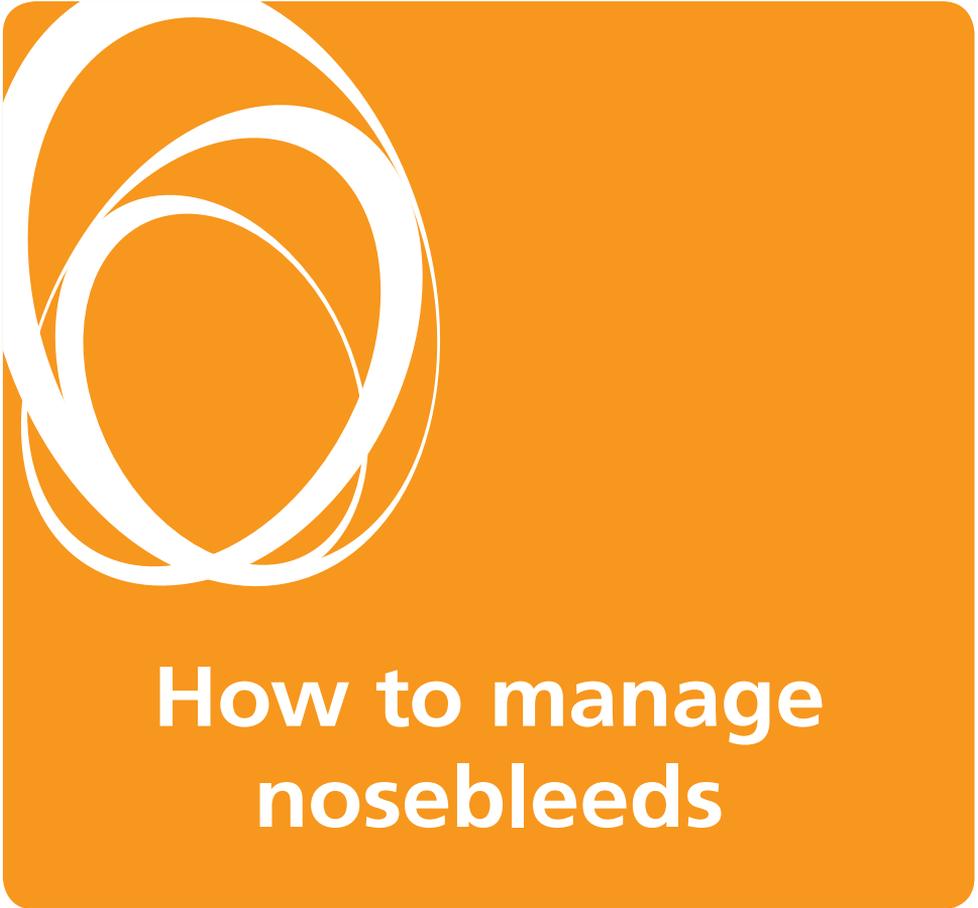




**University Hospitals Birmingham**  
NHS Foundation Trust



# How to manage nosebleeds

**Building healthier lives**

**UHB is a no smoking Trust**

To see all of our current patient information leaflets please visit  
[www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm)

## Nosebleeds

A nosebleed (also called epistaxis) is where a blood vessel in the nose bleeds. Nosebleeds may be mild or severe and vary in how long they take to stop.

Nosebleeds are most often due to damage to an area of the nasal septum (the central structure which separates the two nostrils) where multiple tiny blood vessels join up. This area is found just inside each nostril. It can be damaged by trauma, inflammation or if its lining dries out.

These can be due to:

- Common cold or allergies (e.g. hay fever)
- Picking and blowing the nose
- A dry nose (e.g. due to air conditioning)
- Sinusitis
- Sniffing substances (e.g. cocaine)

Some nosebleeds come from nearer the top of the nose these may be heavier and can be started by:

- Head injuries (e.g. from a fall) or nose surgery
- High blood pressure
- Damaged blood vessels
- Blood thinning drugs (e.g. warfarin) or aspirin
- Blood disorders

## What to do when you get a nosebleed

To stop a nosebleed effectively and help your nose heal properly you should follow the 4 steps below during the bleed:

1. Pinch the fleshy part of your nostrils tightly together for at least 15 minutes
2. Lean your head forward (stops blood running to mouth)
3. Breathe through your mouth
4. Place a cold flannel on your forehead

It is important that you do not put anything up your nose to stop the bleed. This will not allow the damaged area to properly heal.

**If your nosebleed does not stop within 20-30 minutes get medical help, especially if you are taking the drug warfarin.**

## How to prevent further nosebleeds

To help stop yourself getting more nosebleeds you should:

- Use the four steps above when you have a nosebleed
- Avoid picking your nose
- Blow your nose as little as possible and only very gently
- Avoid situations where your nose may be knocked
- Use all medication that your doctor has prescribed for your nosebleeds exactly as directed
- If you have high blood pressure or are on a blood thinning drug (e.g. warfarin or heparin) or aspirin you could discuss this with your GP



The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit [www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm) or call 0121 371 4323.

---

### **Ear, Nose and Throat**

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham  
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2GW  
Telephone: 0121 627 2000

---