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# Nosebleeds

## ***Background***

Nosebleeds are a common disturbing nuisance in our particular climate. The peak time for nosebleeds occurs between September and April every year when we turn on the heat, and thus, make our homes dry. That dryness of the nasal cavity lining promotes itching and rubbing of the nose, which then leads to broken blood vessels on the inside of the front of the nose. Some people have allergies and itchy noses year-round, and bloody noses year-round.

This itching and rubbing of the nose may occur during the day (creating a small amount of blood which dries to a clot), while the bleeding can occur at night, when the clot is rubbed off while turning in bed. The clot may be loosened while showering or stooping to tie shoelaces. The bleeding cannot “spontaneously” occur without breakage of the wall of the blood vessels in the nose. That breakage is usually caused by a finger or the side of the hand (or even a balled-up fist), or in some adults by markedly elevated blood pressures.

*\*\* In some teenage boys, we must consider non-cancerous tumors behind the nose, only visible to an ear, nose and throat specialist.*

## ***Management***

1. Gently blow your nose. This will dislodge clots which may be holding your blood vessels open.
2. Flex the neck (put your chin on your chest).
3. Firmly pinch the soft, fleshy tip of the nose and hold it for five minutes (by the clock).
4. Release the tip and observe for two seconds to see if bleeding recurs.
5. If bleeding resumes, repeat step 3.
6. Release again, and if bleeding resumes, hold onto the nasal tip and go immediately to the hospital for treatment.
7. If, while pinching the nasal tip, bleeding continues and fills the back of the mouth or blood runs out of the mouth, go immediately to the hospital for treatment. Likely, nasal packing will occur.
8. Ice packs on the nose or neck are not helpful.