

# How to stop a nosebleed

When the furnace fires up and the humidity drops, the nose is most at risk. Nosebleeds can range from a simple, brief annoying amount of bleeding to life-threatening bleeding, according to Dr. Peter Shepard, an ear, nose, and throat expert.

The nose has a collection of blood vessels called Kiesselbach's plexus. This area is located at the front of the septum, the cartilage that divides the nose. Vessels from several different main trunks all meet in this spot and are very close to the surface. This is also the area of the nose that tends to dry out the most.

If the surface cracks, the vessels will bleed. The size of the vessels determines how bad the bleeding is. People are more at risk if they have high blood pressure, take blood thinners, use oxygen, or have a deviated nasal septum.

The best treatment for nosebleeds is avoiding them in the first place. Unless you can take an extended trip to Hawaii, you'll want to work on improving the humidity inside your nose.

Apply Vaseline at the front of your nostril twice a day. Saline spray can be kept with you and used throughout the day.



## If you do have a bleed, a few simple things will usually stop it.

- Apply pressure by squeezing the soft part of the nose between your thumb and index finger. Lean forward so you don't swallow any blood (do not hold your head back, as some suggest).
- If that is not enough, oxymetazoline (Afrin) nasal spray can be a miracle drug for nosebleeds. It is a decongestant but works for nosebleeds since it causes blood vessels to tighten. Blow the blood out of the nose, spray twice, and then apply pressure for 15 minutes.
- If the bleeding won't stop, go to the emergency room.