



## **NOSEBLEEDS (EPISTAXIS)**

### **What causes my nose to bleed?**

Most nosebleeds begin in the lower part of the septum, the wall that divides the nose into two cavities. The septum contains many small blood vessels that may become injured and bleed. Common reasons for nosebleeds include dryness, trauma, nose picking, vigorous nose blowing, allergies and infections. Blood clotting disorders, high blood pressure, vascular and autoimmune diseases, and tumors of the nose may also cause nosebleeds. Generally, children and older adults are more susceptible to nosebleeds.

### **What should I do if I have a nosebleed?**

- Remain calm — the vast majority of nosebleeds will stop quickly.
- Sit up and lean forward at the waist.
- Firmly pinch the soft part of your nose and hold for 5 minutes.
- Avoid straining, bending, lifting or exercise for the next 24 hours.
- Do not pick or blow your nose.
- The clot will eventually dissolve without further treatment.

### **What should I do if the bleeding doesn't stop or it recurs?**

- Spray a nasal decongestant spray into both nostrils. Four sprays of Neo-Synephrine or Afrin is recommended for adults.
- Blow your nose gently to clear out all blood clots.
- Pinch and hold your nose for 10 more minutes.
- Apply an ice bag to the bridge of the nose.
- If the nosebleed has not stopped after 30 minutes seek medical attention.

### **When should I see a doctor about my nosebleed?**

- If the bleeding does not stop after 30 minutes of treatment.
- If the bleeding is very heavy or blood flows down the throat when the nose is pinched closed.
- If you have a heavy nosebleed and are taking blood thinners or have poorly controlled high blood pressure.
- If you have frequent nosebleeds.

### **How do I prevent a nosebleed?**

- Lubricate dry nasal passages with ointment such as Bacitracin or Vaseline. A pea-sized dab of ointment is gently placed with a finger onto both sides of the septum. This can be done up to 3 times a day.
- Use a saline (salt water) spray in your nose daily. Two sprays to each nostril twice daily.
- Do not pick your nose.
- Do not put tissue or gauze into your nose.
- Use a humidifier, particularly during the winter months and especially at night.