

Situational Safety: Nosebleeds

Nosebleeds can be annoying, embarrassing, and even frightening. Patients taking Coumadin® (warfarin) may be more at risk for a prolonged, and possibly more severe, bleeding episode.¹

Types & causes of nosebleeds

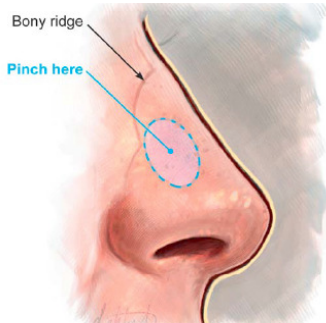
There are two types of nosebleeds – anterior and posterior nosebleeds. Anterior nosebleeds are most common, and occur when small blood vessels rupture in the lower septum. The septum is the portion of the lower nose that separates the nostrils. Bleeding usually occurs in only one nostril. Low humidity, injury to the nose, and uncontrolled high blood pressure are factors that increase the risk of a nosebleed. Excessive nose blowing and/or the use of anti-histamines can also increase the risk of a nosebleed.²

Preventing nosebleeds

The use of over-the-counter saline nasal sprays can help diminish the risk of nosebleeds by maintaining a moist environment in the septum, decreasing the risk of ruptured small blood capillaries. Humidifiers can also be used to increase humidity in the home during fall and winter months, when nosebleeds are more common.²

First Aid

In the event of a nosebleed, patients should apply steady, gentle pressure with the thumb and pointer finger as outlined by the University of Washington Medical Center Anticoagulation Center:



University of Washington Medical Center Anticoagulation Service²

Recommended steps to take following a nosebleed

- Remain calm
- Sit or stand with head facing forward
- Gently pinch the bony ridge of the nose and apply steady pressure
- Apply pressure for 5-10 minutes
- If bleeding continues--apply pressure for 5 more minutes
- If bleeding continues--apply an ice pack to the bridge of the nose to reduce blood flow to the area
- Nosebleeds lasting more than 30 minutes require medical attention²

Over-the-counter products do not substitute for professional healthcare; therefore, warfarin patients should report all bleeding events to their doctor or nurse. Patients are urged not to use oral herbal products (in tablet or capsule form) to treat bleeding.

Visit: www.PTINR.com

- 1 Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. (2007). *Medication Guide for Coumadin Tablets and Coumadin for Injection* [Package Insert]. Princeton, NJ: Bristol-Myers Squibb Company.
- 2 Wittkowsky, A. (2006). *Prevention and treatment of nosebleeds*. Retrieved May 2, 2008, from University of Washington Medical Center Anticoagulation Clinic Web site: <http://www.uwmcacc.org/pdf/nosebleed.pdf>

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