

Lake County ENT/Head & Neck Specialists

Phone (847) 662-4442 Fax (847) 662-4446

Instructions following Nasal Cautery to control nose bleeding

Supplies for home:

Afrin® Nasal decongestant spray (Oxymetazoline)

Vaseline

General: Cauterization of the nose is performed to control recurrent or troublesome, mild to moderate nosebleeds. Silver nitrate is conservatively applied to the source of bleeding with a Q-tip®-like applicator. This causes a mild chemical burn, which seals the bleeding vessels and triggers scar tissue formation. The layer of scar tissue helps prevent future bleeding from that site. Alternatively, for severe bleeding, an electrocautery instrument is used to cauterize the tissue.

Diet: There are no dietary restrictions following nasal cautery.

Pain control: Patients report mild nasal pain or burning for a few to several days following cauterization. This is usually well controlled with Tylenol®.

Activity: No heavy lifting, straining or vigorous cardiovascular exercise for 1 week following the nasal cautery. Any activity in which the nose may be manipulated could cause re-bleeding from the cauterized area during the first 7-10 days.

Nasal care following the procedure: Apply Vaseline to the cauterized nasal passage 3-4 times daily beginning the morning following the procedure. Your doctor may have you spray your nose with decongestant spray such as Afrin® nasal spray (oxymetazoline) as needed for persistent nasal congestion and oozing. A scant gray residue may temporarily stain the skin of the nostril or upper lip. This is from the silver nitrate and generally fades in about 1 week. Gently wiping any gray residue from the nostril opening will avoid this staining.

What to do if bleeding starts again: Spray the bleeding nostril with 3 squirts of Afrin® (oxymetazoline) spray (which is available over-the-counter). Pinch the soft part of the nose (between your thumb and index finger) and breath through your mouth. Hold this pressure for 15 minutes without checking. Repeat this cycle up to 3 times to stop the bleeding. If bleeding is persistent despite this regimen, please call the office at (847) 662-4442 or proceed to the nearest emergency room.