Nose Foreign Body Treatment

Self-Care at Home

It is not advisable to stick anything in the nose while attempting to remove an object there. You may complicate matters by pushing the object farther back into the throat and possibly choking. A few techniques can be tried safely at home to remove the object.

- Blowing your nose will potentially dislodge the object and is more likely to succeed if the uninvolved nostril is closed during such attempts. Hold your nostril closed by pressing a finger against the side.
- A sneeze will actually produce much more force and is an alternative way to push the object forward and out of the nose. Again, it is more effective if the uninvolved nostril is closed. Smelling pepper has been described as a safe way to induce sneezing, but individual responses are quite variable.
- Many people with foreign bodies in the nose are too young to cooperate with these techniques. A parent or caregiver can attempt to remove the object by sealing their mouth over the child's mouth and closing the unaffected nostril with their fingers. Blowing a quick puff of air into the child's mouth has frequently resulted in the object coming out the nostril onto the caregiver's cheek.
  - The child will reflexively protect their lungs, but one should not deliver a large, forceful breath. It is recommended that this technique be done under the supervision of a medical professional. The potential for spread of infection between the child and caregiver should be considered because there may be contact with the child's nasal secretions or blood or both during this maneuver.
- Nasal bleeding is a commonly associated complaint. Some episodes of bleeding will stop on their own. Gently placing a towel over the end of the nose is a safe way to contain the associated mess as long as the person can breathe easily. If the bleeding does not stop within 5 minutes, seek medical advice.
  - Although the most common recommendation for nasal bleeding (nosebleed) is to pinch the soft part of the nose for 10-15 minutes, this technique may not be appropriate depending on the circumstances and object involved.

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The common home remedy of placing an ice pack behind the person's neck is not likely to be effective. Placing a cool compress on the nose itself may occasionally decrease swelling, which may aid in the eventual removal of the object.

- Placing ice or other extremely cold material directly on the tip of the nose is not recommended.

- If there is any question about objects in the nose and medical attention is sought, the person should not be given anything to eat or drink until approved by a doctor. The reason for this inconvenience is that some objects are difficult to remove. Sedation is occasionally needed, which works best and lowers risk for problems from sedation if the person has an empty stomach.

**Medical Treatment**

Treatment will largely depend on the location and identity of the object or objects involved. Do not be surprised if your doctor uses his or her own unique technique to remove an object. Years of experience often provide innovative techniques that are safe and effective.

- Commonly used techniques include applying gentle suction to the object, long tweezers, or instruments that have a loop or hook at the tip.
- If the object is metallic, a long instrument may be magnetized to assist in gently pulling the object from the nose.
- Another technique involves gently passing a soft rubber catheter past the object. These catheters have an inflatable balloon at the tip, which can then be inflated and pulled back, along with the foreign body.
- Any experienced professional can tell you that children typically struggle with these techniques. Struggling will decrease the likelihood of success and increase the likelihood of complications. Sedation may be considered an option to allow calm and comfortable removal of the object.

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