



PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Anterior nasal packing

Insertion of an anterior nasal tamponade device to control anterior epistaxis that has not stopped with first aid, topical vasoconstrictors or cautery.



EM Orbit

Patient reference

Date

Time

Completed by

Equipment ready

- ☐ PPE: gloves, apron, fluid-resistant mask with eye protection or visor
- ☐ Headlight
- ☐ Thudichum nasal speculum
- ☐ Suction with a Frazier or Yankauer tip
- ☐ Topical vasoconstrictor and local anaesthetic spray or soaked cotton pledgets, per local protocol
- ☐ Silver nitrate cautery sticks
- ☐ Anterior nasal tamponade device: expanding sponge tampon or inflatable balloon pack, correct length
- ☐ Sterile water or saline to hydrate or expand the pack; syringe for balloon inflation
- ☐ Tape, gauze, vomit bowl, tissues

Before · Resuscitation and assessment

- ☐ Assess airway, breathing and circulation first
- ☐ Wear full PPE, including eye protection
- ☐ Sit the patient upright, leaning forward, and apply firm continuous pressure to the soft part of the nose for 10–15 minutes
- ☐ Obtain IV access and bloods (full blood count, clotting, group and save) if bleeding is significant or the patient is anticoagulated
- ☐ Ask about anticoagulants and antiplatelets and manage per EMOD-CP-89
- ☐ Check blood pressure, but treat the bleed; do not delay for blood pressure control

Before · Examination and first-line treatment

- ☐ Ask the patient to blow the nose or suction out clots
- ☐ Examine with a headlight and speculum to find the bleeding point
- ☐ Apply topical vasoconstrictor and anaesthetic and wait for effect
- ☐ If a bleeding point is seen, cauterise it with silver nitrate for a few seconds, starting around the point and moving inwards
- ☐ **Do not cauterise both sides of the septum at the same visit**
Risk of septal perforation.
- ☐ If bleeding continues despite cautery, or no point is visible, proceed to anterior packing

During · Preparing the pack

- ☐ Explain that the pack is uncomfortable but controls the bleeding; obtain consent
- ☐ Choose the correct pack length for the patient's nose, per the manufacturer
- ☐ Prepare the pack per the manufacturer's instructions

During · Insertion

- ☐ Position the patient sitting upright with the head neutral
- ☐ Insert the pack along the floor of the nose, parallel to the hard palate, directly backwards
- ☐ **Never direct the pack upwards towards the skull base**
- ☐ Insert the full length of the pack in one smooth movement until only the string or pilot tube is visible
- ☐ Expand the pack
- ☐ **Do not over-inflate a balloon pack**
Excess pressure causes pain and pressure necrosis of the septum and alar rim.
- ☐ Check the oropharynx with a torch for continued bleeding down the back of the throat
- ☐ If bleeding continues, consider packing the other nostril to increase septal pressure, and call ENT
- ☐ Tape the strings or pilot tube to the cheek so the pack cannot migrate into the airway

After · Monitoring and disposition

- ☐ Observe the patient for re-bleeding, including posterior bleeding
- ☐ Reassess haemodynamics and check haemoglobin if blood loss is significant
- ☐ Refer to ENT per local pathway
- ☐ **Persistent bleeding despite anterior packing needs urgent ENT review for posterior packing or surgical control**
- ☐ Antibiotics are not routinely required for a short-duration anterior pack; follow local protocol
- ☐ Plan pack removal, typically after 24–48 hours, per ENT advice

After · Advice and documentation

- ☐ Advise the patient not to pull on the strings, blow the nose, or do strenuous activity
- ☐ Explain the warning signs: bleeding down the throat, fever, rash, feeling faint, or dislodged pack
- ☐ Document the bleeding side, source if seen, treatments, pack type and length, time inserted and planned removal



A drafted procedure checklist, awaiting senior review. Perform procedures only within your training, competence and local policy. It does not replace your clinical judgement.

EM Orbit · Emergency medicine, in one orbit · proc-nasal-packing · red rows are the steps that must not be missed