

## In the know about nose-blowing <sup>[1]</sup>

1) Dear Alice,

You know when you get a cold and you have to blow your nose a lot and it gets all sore from rubbing it over and over again with a Kleenex? Do you know of any kind of cream or something that you can put on your nose to help soothe the soreness caused by frequent nose blowing? Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

Red Nose

2) Dear Alice,

I am a 16 year old girl who isn't very good at blowing her nose. I can blow the air down hard enough, but nobody has ever taught me a good technique for a proper clear-out. What is the best way to hold your nose in the tissue to get a really good nose-blow? How would you recommend I try to blow my nose?

### **Answer**

Dear Red Nose and Reader #2,

Having a stuffy or runny nose can be frustrating, and your nose getting chafed from blowing it can be even more so. Luckily, there are some techniques to help you blow your nose and soothe one that's sore any time you feel a cold coming on.

Whether your nose is stuffed up or runny, blowing your nose can provide relief. Before you blow, it may be helpful to prepare yourself by stocking up on disposable tissues instead of washable handkerchiefs, as used 'hankies' bundled up in your pocket can provide a breeding ground for bacteria. As far as actually blowing your nose, start by taking a deep breath through your mouth to ensure you have enough oxygen and close your eyes for added comfort. It may also help to keep your mouth slightly open when you're ready to let loose to help prevent damage to your eardrums. When you're ready, blow out brief, gentle puffs (as opposed to those hair-raising honks) to spare your nostrils, Eustachian tubes (part of your middle ear), and ear drums. After

all's been cleared, wipe your nose to get rid of any rogue boogers. If you try this and your nose-blowing experience still isn't as smooth as you'd like, you might try blocking one nostril while blowing out the other, to help clear them slowly and gently. For extra stubborn mucus, try inhaling steam from a shower or bowl of hot water to help loosen any tough clogs. And just like that — your nose has been gently blown, allowing you to breathe easier!

Sometimes, even if you use all the trusted nose-blowing techniques, you may still get a little chafing on your nose. Luckily, there are a few things you might try to help soothe a sore nose:

- **Go easy:** Try blowing and wiping your nose gently. Often, aggressively rubbing your nose with a tissue causes unwanted friction and soreness. Instead, use a blotting motion to go easier on your skin.
- **Choose wisely:** As mentioned earlier, it's more hygienic to use tissues instead of handkerchiefs. Some kinds of tissues are formulated with lotions, aloe, or vitamin E to help soften the blow. But if you're not willing to spend a little extra on those, no worries — plain paper tissues work just fine!
- **Hydrate:** Consider drinking enough fluids and using a vaporizer or humidifier to keep your nose from drying out and becoming irritated.
- **Moisturize:** Similar to hydration, plain creams or lotions may help the skin on your nose stay moist and greatly reduce any discomfort you feel. You might also use petroleum jelly, aloe, or you could also look for products that have added moisturizers. If you try a new product, be sure to check that it has similar ingredients to ones you've used before, to avoid any unwanted irritation or allergic reactions. On that note, it may be best to avoid scented creams or lotions as they may further irritate the skin.
- **Clean carefully:** By using warm water and a gentle cleanser, you may keep your nose clean and prevent any crust from building up around your nose. Try to stay away from very hot water, exfoliants, or harsh soaps, as they sometimes remove necessary natural and moisturizing oils from the skin. If you still develop any dry boogers or dry skin around your nose, you can apply a warm and damp compress to help loosen them and allow them to naturally fall off.

Moving forward, it could also be helpful for both of you to protect yourself from the cold, flu, or any allergens that may trigger a need to blow your nose in the first place. Some protective measures could include getting your flu shots [2], frequently washing your hands [3], getting enough sleep [4], trying out stress reduction techniques, and tending to any allergies or hay fever.

Hopefully, with these tips, nose-blowing is “snot” tricky any longer!

Alice!

Category:

[General Health](#) [5]

[Aches, Pains & Other Ailments](#) [6]

[Colds & Flu](#) [7]

[Skin Conditions](#) [8]

## Related questions

[Recurring flu symptoms or something else?](#) [9]

[The corners of my mouth are cracking up](#) [10]

[Do I have a cold or the flu?](#) [11]

## Resources

[Medical Services \(Morningside\)](#) [12]

[Medical Services \(CUIMC\)](#) [13]

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## Footer menu

- ▼ [Contact Alice!](#)
  - [Content Use](#)
  - [Media Inquiries](#)
  - [Comments & Corrections](#)
- ▼ [Syndication & Licensing](#)
  - [Licensing Q&As](#)
  - [Get Alice! on Your Website](#)
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### Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/know-about-nose-blowing>

[2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/should-i-get-flu-shot>

[3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/how-to-wash-hands>

[4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/sleep-deprivation>

[5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/general-health>

- [6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/aches-pains-other-ailments>
- [7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/colds-flu>
- [8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/skin-conditions>
- [9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/recurring-flu-symptoms-or-something-else-0>
- [10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/corners-my-mouth-are-cracking-0>
- [11] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/do-i-have-cold-or-flu>
- [12] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-morningside>
- [13] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/medical-services-cuimc>