

## **Sawbones 120: Nosebleeds**

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### **Intro (Clint McElroy):**

Sawbones is a show about medical history and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

### **Justin:**

Welcome to Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine, and I'm your co-host Justin McElroy.

### **Sydnee:**

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

### **Justin:**

I am so happy to be back on the ground, Sydnee.

### **Sydnee:**

Well, me too, Justin. What— Were you jumping a lot earlier or...?

### **Justin:**

No, no, sweetheart. We took, you— This is like— I mean, I've heard of, like, playing dumb to help with the bit before, but, like, we were in the plane together.

### **Sydnee:**

Like last week.

### **Justin:**

Yeah, the weekend.

**Sydnee:**

Yes.

**Justin:**

Yeah. We, uh, we took some flights to New York.

**Sydnee:**

That just a lot has happened since then. You know, I'm a busy woman.

**Justin:**

Sure, making deals.

**Sydnee:**

I've got— I've got a lot going on. I'm out there making deals, closing deals.

**Justin:**

Closing deals, chopping 'em up and spitting 'em out.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Um, but we— You know, we—

**Sydnee:**

That's what doctors do.

**Justin:**

We flew to... Well, you do chop up, I guess. Sometimes.

**Sydnee:**

No, I, that's— I mean, like I'm not a surgeon.

**Justin:**

I, uh—

**Sydnee:**

If I'm chopping people up that's—

**Justin:**

Surgeon, doctor, same thing.

**Sydnee:**

You should probably put me in jail.

**Justin:**

Surgeons and doctors are the same thing, basically.

**Sydnee:**

Well, I mean, yes, but, anyway...

**Justin:**

Glad we agree. Uh, no, we had some— We had a rough flight going in 'cause the weather was super bad. It was, like, I heard somebody got hurt going into New York.

**Sydnee:**

Not on our plane.

**Justin:**

Not on our plane, but, like, from the turbulence, it was really rough.

**Sydnee:**

It was, it was scary. Except that I know the trick now on a plane, which is you just look at the flight attendant.

**Justin:**

Yeah. You look at the flight attendant. That's the secret.

**Sydnee:**

And the flight attendant for the most part, although they, like, if they don't look scared and so that's your way of knowing, like, don't be scared, the flight attendant's not scared. But did you hear the flight attendant on that one flight saying that he makes faces to mess with people?

**Justin:**

That's awesome. That's great.

**Sydnee:**

That, like, sometimes they'll be turbulence and he'll just make like, this really...

**Justin:**

I'm so down.

**Sydnee:**

... horrified, shocked face and, like, look around because he knows.

**Justin:**

I'm so into it. Like, but like—

**Sydnee:**

No, I think that's terrible.

**Justin:**

No, that's amazing.

**Sydnee:**

I think that's an abusive power.

**Justin:**

No, that's amazing 'cause if you get out of that alive that— It's like in fight club, like, the breakfast you have the next morning we'll be the greatest meal you ever eat. And it's, like, you'll really appreciate the little things.

**Sydnee:**

How would you like that if I did that to my— Like, if you're my patient and I just got, like, your lab results back and I said, like, "Let me pull 'em up and look at 'em." And like I pull 'em up and look at 'em and I just like, [gasps].

**Justin:**

That can't be right.

**Sydnee:**

Because that's how people react when they're scared, right? Wah!

**Justin:**

See, now I gotta turn your mic down 'cause you're— I didn't know you were gonna get Randy Macho Man Savage on me, bringing that, those decibels. The decies as we call 'em in the audio engineering industry.

**Sydnee:**

Sorry about that.

**Justin:**

Uh, but it wasn't the worst flight I've ever had. Certainly not. Um, the worst one I ever had was one time I got a nosebleed on a flight and I had nothing. I didn't, I—

**Sydnee:**

[mocking] "The worst flight I ever has was when I got a nosebleed."

**Justin:**

And no, it was really embarrassing 'cause, like, I didn't have anything. I had to call the stewardess over and she looked— 'Cause we were about to take off. We haven't taken off yet. And she looked at me like I was, like, a flight risk. Like, do I need to go back to the airport?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs].

**Justin:**

'Cause of my terrible nosebleed.

**Sydnee:**

Because you can't handle flying?

**Justin:**

One time.

**Sydnee:**

We got— Ugh, got a nosebleeder on the plane.

**Justin:**

One time I was a—

**Sydnee:**

And we don't have SkyMall from Dee's to mop it up anymore.

**Justin:**

Um, I miss SkyMall. Um, we...

**Sydnee:**

Me too.

**Justin:**

We, uh, one time I had a, um, uh, I was working the polls as, like, an election official. Uh, and...

**Sydnee:**

If you can believe they trusted Justin to do that...

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

...they did.

**Justin:**

I got a nosebleed during that and they— Uh, a lady— And I was like, just, you know, I was attending to my nosebleed and this lady comes up—

**Sydnee:**

For those of you at home, Justin just, like, put his finger up his nose, right?

**Justin:**

I mean, I have—

**Sydnee:**

In that moment, as if that's how you attend to a nosebleed, you just, like, cram your middle finger up your nostril.

**Justin:**

And she looks at me and she says, "Can I get someone else to help me vote? You've been fooling with a nosebleed."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs].

**Justin:**

I was like, "Okay lady. All right. That's fine, if that's how you wanna play it."

**Sydnee:**

I don't like you nosebleeders involved in the, in the electoral process, it makes me very nervous. So Justin, other than, you know, having them, what do you know about nosebleeds?

**Justin:**

It is a source of great mystery to me. I know what to do if I get one.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

I know that it is often caused by, like, dry conditions. They seem to be more, uh, prevalent.

**Sydnee:**

Yep.

**Justin:**

I know that if they don't stop, you're in trouble.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Well, I mean that's, and that's a good point to make about bleeding of any kind from any site on your body really, is that if it doesn't stop, you're in trouble.

**Justin:**

That's bad. So that's it.

**Sydnee:**

Why don't I tell you some more about nosebleeds?

**Justin:**

Please do, Sydnee, because I do get them from time to time and I'd like to know more.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. And, uh, so thank— So I do wanna thank you for helping inspire this topic, 'cause you get them.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

So thank you for getting nosebleed, I guess. Also I wanna thank, uh, Cheryl and Joel as well as Derek for suggesting this topic. Uh, so—

**Justin:**

The nosebleed kids, they call 'em.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. Cheryl, Joel and Derek, the nosebleed kids and Justin. Justin's in that club too. Um, nosebleeds, uh, you know, probably have been around for as long as people have had both noses and blood—

**Justin:**

So at least 6,000 years.

**Sydnee:**

That's... Sure, at least.

**Justin:**

At least, 6000.



**Sydnee:**

Well, at least.

**Justin:**

Minimum 6000 years.

**Sydnee:**

We'll say that. That's fine. I'll leave that alone. It makes sense then that we have writings about nosebleeds back to the time of the ancient Greeks, because again, you know, people had noses back then, presumably. I don't have any reason to think they didn't have noses.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

Um, but nosebleeds weren't always seen as a bad thing.

**Justin:**

Oh, really?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. There was a belief for a long time that, um, bleeding from anywhere, and specifically from your nose, may just be a way of purifying yourself. Like, your body was getting rid of blood it didn't need.

**Justin:**

Oh, my God.

**Sydnee:**

Um, because you had some sort of illness or something spiritually wrong, you know, within you, and so you would just bleed and then that would make things better. Which makes sense if you think about a long, long tradition of bleeding somebody or, you know, leeching somebody in order to fix them, spontaneous bleeding may just be your body taking care of it on its own.

**Justin:**

Well, there is a certain logic to it if you don't— If you, like, don't know anything about anything. Because most of the things get, like, expelled from your body that was what you did want to happen. Breathing out, bugs, poo poo, pee pee, it's all supposed to come out. It's, like, good that it's coming out. Almost... Think about it, like, anything.

**Sydnee:**

Okay. Well, that's fair.

**Justin:**

Almost anything that came outta your body, liquid wise, it's because it was supposed to.

**Sydnee:**

Okay. I think that's a fair point.

**Justin:**

So you could follow the through line is what I'm saying, it's like—

**Sydnee:**

Because you don't, you didn't know that you had, like, at a given moment, you have a finite amount of blood.

**Justin:**

Right. Yes, exactly.

**Sydnee:**

And, like, granted, you're gonna make more, but, like, you're not gonna make it instantly. So at that moment, there's only so much you have, but you wouldn't know that.

**Justin:**

Right. I'm just saying, we think, I mean, we see most of the things that get expelled from your body that is ideal. You did want that out, there's very little that's like, "Hey, get back in there." You know?

**Sydnee:**

Um, it, there was also a thought that, in addition, to it maybe being beneficial, that maybe it was just the result of like exercising too much. It was thought that if you exert yourself too hard, you might just get a nosebleed.

**Justin:**

No, I get nosebleeds so it's not that.

**Sydnee:**

It was a sign to, like, chill out, relax more. Or maybe, um, that you were too—

**Justin:**

[laughs].

**Sydnee:**

Maybe you were—

**Justin:**

That's how they came up with, uh, Joe Chill. That's how they came up with uh, Joe Cool.

**Sydnee:**

Joe Cool.

**Justin:**

Joe Cool. It was a Snoopy and then he just had, like, blood gushing out his nose, like, "Hey, chill."

**Sydnee:**

It was a campaign to stop nosebleeds.

**Justin:**

Don't have a cow, man.

**Sydnee:**

Um, you also, uh, might get a nosebleed if you were too sexually excited. Which is, like, that just paints the picture for me of, like, the saddest kid in

school, like, the saddest high schooler who's, like, sees there's that moment, like, in the old, like, 80s movies where, like, you would see the girl you like, and like the music would play real slow and they'd be like—

**Justin:**

Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:**

[vocalizes] You know, and then you'd see her and her hair's blowing and then, like, blood's gushing—

**Justin:**

Just blood just gushing out, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]. Um, it could be seen as a sign of anything like, uh, from, like, a sign that you were in love to a sign that you were about to die. So pretty much like—

**Justin:**

[wheezes] Got a run of the gamut there, old timey dudes.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, nosebleeds— Nobody really knew how to interpret them. Um, Hippocrates did describe ways of stopping them. Very practical ways. Just, like, stick something up your nose and make the bleeding stop.

**Justin:**

Congrats Hippocrates.

**Sydnee:**

So, which, as we'll discuss, isn't really too much different than what we do nowadays.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, the Assyrians also wrote about similar devices. Scribonius Largus from the first century spoke of a device that you could use that would plug up your nasal passage, but also had, like, a hollow tube through the middle so that you could breathe through it.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm. Okay.

**Sydnee:**

I mean, which— I mean, that's a good idea, I guess.

**Justin:**

Sure. Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

I mean, you got two nostrils and, like, a mouth.

**Justin:**

Yeah. You'll be fine.

**Sydnee:**

But sure, sure. Um, there were other ancient cures that involved, like, generally for stopping bleeding, anything that was bleeding, they would tell you to put something cold on it, that was thought to stop bleeding. Um, or applying pressure, which as we know now is, like, the best thing to do for bleeding.

So that wasn't a terrible idea. Um, but then it ran the gamut from, from that to, like, if somebody's bleeding, you should, like, dump— Like put 'em in a bathtub and keep dumping ice cold water on them until their limbs turn green.

**Justin:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

And then just bathe their head in limestone water and vinegar.

**Justin:**

No. I would say no, don't.

**Sydnee:**

No. Well, yeah, I wouldn't do that either. I've never seen somebody get so cold that their limbs turn green.

**Justin:**

No, that sounds made up. Maybe they made that one up. Maybe that was a funny joke.

**Sydnee:**

Is it funny?

**Justin:**

No, like, for those times it was.

**Sydnee:**

Not like ha-ha funny.

**Justin:**

There was a time before, there was a point in history somebody was, like, "Why the chicken cross the road?" And everybody was, like, "I have no idea what you're talking about." And then the person said, "to get to the other side," and everybody thought they were, like, a comedy legend, like Don Reynolds' level funny. This is a time before that time. So, like, it doesn't— It don't take much. It don't take much.

**Sydnee:**

Um, my favorite joke involves chickens.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Have I told my favorite joke before?

**Justin:**

Mm... Go ahead.

**Sydnee:**

Uh—

**Justin:**

I'll make time.

**Sydnee:**

Why does a chicken coop have two doors?

**Justin:**

Why does a chicken coop have two doors, Sydnee?

**Sydnee:**

Because if it had four, it would be a chicken Sedan.

**Justin:**

Crushed it.

**Sydnee:**

[delighted] That's my favorite joke.

**Justin:**

Crushed it. Also, by the way, never noticed before, pretty sure chicken coops have one door. Just the one I think.

**Sydnee:**

I mean, like, they probably have a front and back door.

**Justin:**

Really? You think for it—

**Sydnee:**

I have no idea—

**Justin:**

Convenient egress for the chickens.

**Sydnee:**

I've no concept. I don't know. It's the— Just leave the joke alone, okay? It's my favorite. Why do you have to pick apart my favorite joke?

**Justin:**

It's fine the way it is.

**Sydnee:**

Other things that they may have used for nosebleeds, um, in ancient times, cupping, are you familiar with that? The cupping—

**Justin:**

Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah. Where you light a match under a candle and it creates suction by—

**Sydnee:**

Well, not a candle. Just like a cup.

**Justin:**

No, no, no. Like a, you light a—

**Sydnee:**

Remove the oxygen from something and then put it on your back to create suction and it creates these awful rings.

**Justin:**

It hurt you and—

**Sydnee:**

In bloody areas maybe.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Don't do that.



**Justin:**

It's like a hickey from a fish bowl. Like a fish bowl hickey.

**Sydnee:**

That's a— That's a great— Yes, it's a hickey from a fish bowl.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Tiny fish bowl.

**Sydnee:**

That sounds like a great, like, album title, a hickey from a fishbowl.

**Justin:**

Can We Lose the News presents...

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]. Uh, the, uh, ancient Egyptians would use a mixture of Papyrus Ash and vinegar and just kind of plug up whatever was bleeding. Which I mean, I guess that's probably work.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Go for it.

**Sydnee:**

Um, dried cannabis has been used.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Now we're talking.

**Sydnee:**

Sure. Uh, leek oil mixed with vinegar and manna 'cause that's... [pause]  
...readily available?

**Justin:**

Man, I always wanted to eat manna.

**Sydnee:**

Really?

**Justin:**

Manna from heaven. You know, like, when they would show it in, like, cartoons— like, biblical cartoons in Sunday school and stuff.

**Sydnee:**

No, I didn't watch a lot of biblical cartoons.

**Justin:**

Yeah. I know. I'm, like, trust me on this one. Those— They would always have cartoons about, like, manna falling from heaven and it always looked, like, the best. It looked like ground up clouds of cinnamon toast crunch.

**Sydnee:**

Really?

**Justin:**

And I was, like, super wanted to eat manna. It was everywhere.

**Sydnee:**

I always assumed it would look like, like, white blobs.

**Justin:**

Yeah. In, like, but I think they have, like, magical like heavenly sparkles on them and it made it look like cinnamon sugar dusting from the cinnamon sugar—

**Sydnee:**

That sounds better than what I imagined manna to be.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Yeah. It's probably not. Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, which is more, like, this mushy turn up is what I always kind of...

**Justin:**

Ugh. You'll ruin manna for me.

**Sydnee:**

There's a stone that is thought to be helpful against any kind of bleeding and specifically against nosebleeds, uh, bloodstone or heliotrope was thought to stop bleeding if you would just get the stone really cold and then hold it up against whatever was bleeding, eventually it would stop.

**Justin:**

Maybe, yeah. I mean, if it's, like, pressure, right?

**Sydnee:**

I mean, yeah. I guess if you're applying pressure, but that wasn't the thought process behind bloodstone.

**Justin:**

Well, sure. No.

**Sydnee:**

It was that it was a magical stone that would stop bleeding. Um, plus— the benefit of that, though, if you decide to use heliotrope is that, you know, not only will it stop your nosebleed, supposedly, it's very stimulating to your base and heart chakras, which as you— You know— Justin, if you know one thing about me, it's that I'm very concerned with that.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and it will also teach you how to travel invisibly between worlds and negotiate different realms...

**Justin:**

What are you talking about right now?

**Sydnee:**

... because it has shapeshifting properties.

**Justin:**

No. What, what are you talking about?

**Sydnee:**

We have to do a show about crystals and healing rocks someday. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Ugh, I've crackled so much. That's my new, by the way—

**Sydnee:**

It's a whole other issue.

**Justin:**

That's, like, my new YouTube heat by the way. Oh, people talking earnestly about crystals is, like... [kiss] That's my new— It's, like, my new makeup tutorials.

**Sydnee:**

I found this from like a, like a magical, like, crystal and healing rock and stuff site.

**Justin:**

Grocery hauls, makeup tutorials...

**Sydnee:**

It's just endless.

**Justin:**

... candle reviews, that's that old stuff. I'm onto those crystal videos now, earnest crystal videos. And not earnest as in Hey for Ernest, "We talk about crystals, Verne!" No, not like that. Like, people speaking super honestly about raising their energy. [sighs] Delectable.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, okay. In relation to the four humors, moving on from crystals and Justin's YouTube video obsessions, um, in relation to the four humors, uh, any kind of bleeding, you know, we kind of talked about, like, may have

been seen as, like, a natural thing that the body needs to do to balance out the humors. Um, but if you did see it as a bad thing, then you would just use some other method to try to get those humors in alignment. So, like, you're getting a nosebleed, have this enema.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

'Cause your day isn't bad enough already.

**Justin:**

All right, then.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, here's a special diet, or here's something that will make you puke or pee or maybe we'll— You're having a nosebleed, we want it to stop, so we will bleed you.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Somewhere else.

**Justin:**

I mean that will work eventually.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Well, I mean, you won't have a return client.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

Like you're gonna lose a return business there.

**Justin:**

No, that's true.

**Sydnee:**

Um, Pliny the Elder had a lot to say about nosebleeds.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

Of course. Uh, for one he saw them as an important regular, like, you know, like, a regular bleeding for humans. Kind of, like, you know how sometimes we're supposed to have forest fires. Do you know, you know what I'm talking about? Like there's— Like sometimes a fire is supposed to happen, like it's like a healthy...

**Justin:**

Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... healthy thing for...

**Justin:**

It's, like, a natural... Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... natural for an ecosystem. It's, like, I guess he saw nosebleeds kind of like that. Like every once in a while, you just need to have a bleeding. And for men specifically, it was seen as, like, a vicarious menstruation.

Like, men don't menstruate, instead they get nosebleeds. Um, and then there was a belief that, like, at puberty, just like women would start having their periods, men would just bleed maybe once a year, like, from their nose.

**Justin:**

No, maybe.

**Sydnee:**

Um, it was even a reason not to actually do, like, bleeding or leeching on men and women who are about to approach puberty because the thought was, like, well, they're gonna start getting their nosebleeds soon and that's gonna take care of it...

**Justin:**

[laughs].

**Sydnee:**

... so don't worry about it. In which case, that was kind of helpful.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and it was thought that even in that light, if you didn't get nosebleeds, you might get headaches or joint pains or other kinds of issues because you needed the nosebleeds for something, you know, useful.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, there was also this belief, uh, that Pliny agreed with it, sometimes you could divert menstrual bleeding to the nose by, like, it's same way that they, you know, in the fake disease hysteria, they would like move the uterus back into place...

**Justin:**

Yeah. Okay.

**Sydnee:**

... by like holding a pleasing scent towards the end of the body you want the uterus to move...

**Justin:**

Lure it down there, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... towards or whatever, or a bad scent to move it away. If you moved the uterus up some, it would divert the menstrual bleeding to the nose, and that was, like, a healthier menstruation. The nasal menstruation.

**Justin:**

Well, that's wild, man.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. That's not—

**Justin:**

And inaccurate, right?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Yes, honey, that is inaccurate. You can't divert the menstrual blood to your nose by holding something that smells bad under your vagina.

**Justin:**

Um, I would've guessed that. I mean, had I been—

**Sydnee:**

Do you want me to write that down?

**Justin:**

No. Maybe cross stitch it on a pillow. Just tell me to remember.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, great. All in all, Pliny had about 55 different herbal recipes for nosebleeds. So—

**Justin:**

So effective, you know it [laughs].

**Sydnee:**



So, the next time you have, like, a week of vacation, my recommendation for you, get Pliny's book, get a nosebleed, try out all 55. Let me know what works.

**Justin:**

I, there— Our rule, cure-all's cure nothing, we need one that's, like, if there are 55 cures for something there isn't one.

**Sydnee:**

There isn't a cure.

**Justin:**

There isn't a cure.

**Sydnee:**

And also Pliny probably came up with it.

**Justin:**

I wanna know, like, about— I wanna know about nosebleeds, like, really. Like, what's going on in there?

**Sydnee:**

Well, before I tell you the truth about nosebleeds, Justin, why don't you follow me to the billing department?

**Justin:**

Let's go.

[theme song plays]

**Justin:**

So Syd, what— I have to know about, like, nosebleeds— Can you tell me anything about 'em? Like, I just wanna know how they happen.

**Sydnee:**

Well, Justin, I'm gonna tell you like how they actually happen, but we've only made it through ancient times. We've only made it through Pliny. We still have the ever so gross and disturbing middle ages to get through.

**Justin:**

Uh, we need, like, I want a middle ages sound effect, 'cause, like, it's about to pop off. Anytime you get to the middle ages, like if you thought things were maybe getting better, the middle ages are like, "ah-ah-ah." It's like that computer program on Dennis and AJ's computer when you try to break into it. Ah-ah-ah, nope. Things aren't getting better. It's the middle ages, buckle in.

**Sydnee:**

And the sound effect would be, like, something, like, burping and rotting and, like, putrefying...

**Justin:**

Like a burp sound, and then a woman saying, "It smells like rotting! The burp!" [crosstalk]

**Sydnee:**

So just— Just in post, if you could just, like—

**Justin:**

I just did.

**Sydnee:**

Whip that up for me.

**Justin:**

No need.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, all right. Excellent.

**Justin:**

Just perfect. I did it perfectly.

**Sydnee:**

Great. That was exactly what we were looking for.

**Justin:**

"It smells like rotting, doesn't it?"

**Sydnee:**

So in the middle ages—

**Justin:**

"Like rotting mutton, that burp did."

**Sydnee:**

And when we put lots of gross stuff, various places on our very gross selves, um, cranial moss was a very popular remedy for bleeding.

**Justin:**

I feel like we've heard about cranial moss.

**Sydnee:**

We have! We have. We talked about cranial moss in a past episode. Um, and you may remember it is the moss that grew on skulls.

**Justin:**

Skulls.

**Sydnee:**

Um, mainly from, like, people who were hanged and then were left outside to—

**Justin:**

Yeah, a lot of gross patience to get the cranial moss.

**Sydnee:**

Yes, to rot in the elements, unfortunately. That would happen.

**Justin:**

Sorry about that.

**Sydnee:**

Nobody was cleaning up. And so there's their skulls would—

**Justin:**

Sorry to leave you to rot, but we may get a nosebleed later, so...

**Sydnee:**

And we need your skull to grow some moss so we can take the moss off of the skull and then stick it up our nose.

**Justin:**

Yeah!

**Sydnee:**

And if that's not bad enough, there's something worse. Something again that we've talked about before. Do you remember mummia?

**Justin:**

Uh, that's, like, mummy Jell-O, basically.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. So the melted down gooey black remains of mummies, or mummia, was also used for bleeding. So if you didn't like the idea of getting moss off a dead guy's head and sticking that up your nose, how about an actual dead guy melted down into a gooey black residue that you could stick up your nose?

**Justin:**

If you don't wanna to take the time to go find cranial moss to stick up your nose, how about some Doug up there? What if you just found some old Doug, just put some Doug up there. That'll take care of it.

**Sydnee:**

Poor Doug. Do you think when Doug was alive, he had any idea that someday his last, like, his last job, his last earthly task would be to be melted down into goo and stuck up somebody's nose to stop bleeding?

**Justin:**

If Doug had that thought, I bet he was an interesting cap. Like, not, like, inviting him to parties interesting, but, like, if you ran into him every once in a while, you might be, like, "Hey Doug, what are you thinking about right now?"

**Sydnee:**

Can you imagine, like, all his friends would, like, sit down for drinks later and be, like, "Anybody got any good Doug stories?" And be like, "Oh man, you will not believe what Doug told me."

**Justin:**

You will not believe this. And then later his friend's like, "Does anybody have any good Doug? My nose is bleeding."

**Sydnee:**

Now, all I can think about is if I'm gonna end up as a goeey black substance someone sticks up their nose.

**Justin:**

Can we stop with the existential crisis and maybe do our medical history podcast, that would be, like, amazing.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, sorry. I think the least disturbing, uh, treatment I found from this time period is actually, uh, there was a belief that somehow toads were associated with, uh, being able to stop bleeding. Like, for whatever reason, toads were just thought to do that. And so, like, you could, you know, just hold a toad on something that was bleeding or something like that.

But the most popular way to do it was to get dead toads that were dried out and then soak them in vinegar, and then either put one on your forehead or you could, like, string 'em up like a necklace and wear 'em around for fashion and also to stop nosebleeds. And also if you don't want friends.

**Justin:**

Yeah. You don't want anybody around. Oh, that's Stinky McNosebleed. Everybody hates his guts.

**Sydnee:**

Why isn't he cool like us and just stick Doug up his nose?

**Justin:**

Just put some Doug up there. It's no problem.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, in the 1600s, a less disgusting, but maybe also a less effective plan was to just write some magical words on your head.

**Justin:**

I mean, by the time your friends finished doing that, it would probably have stopped.

**Sydnee:**

Um, in following years, uh, it was suggested that maybe you could, if you were having a nosebleed, you could get some of the blood that was coming out of your nose and fry it up and then sniff it, and then that would stop the bleeding.

**Justin:**

That's what, uh, blood sausage is, right?

**Sydnee:**

Nope.

**Justin:**

Is that what black pudding is? That's what black pudding is, right?

**Sydnee:**

Not that.

**Justin:**

Not that, but it's, like, basically that.

**Sydnee:**

Not nose blood.

**Justin:**

Basically that though, right?

**Sydnee:**

No, I'm pretty, it's not nose blood.

**Justin:**

Okay. I'll take your word for it.

**Sydnee:**

I think it does involve blood though, right?

**Justin:**

It's just, like, congealed blood, yeah. That's what black pudding is.

**Sydnee:**

But with like other stuff, right?

**Justin:**

Probably some onions.

**Sydnee:**

It's congealed blood and onions?

**Justin:**

[laughs]. I don't know, I've never eaten it.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, I don't think it's nose blood either way. Like I'm 99% sure it has nothing to do with the nose.

**Justin:**

Don't write in and tell us, never eating anything called black pudding. Sorry. Tell me whatever you want and it's not gonna change my opinion.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, but if you enjoy that, please feel free.

**Justin:**

Oh, go hog wild.

**Sydnee:**

I am not here, I am not here to tell anybody what kind of pudding they can or can't eat.

**Justin:**

Go hog wild.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, there, there was also a thought that—

**Justin:**

I ate— We ate an old pudding that we let rot in our closet for six weeks because that's what Mary Berry said today.

**Sydnee:**

Now that's a Christmas pudding, that is totally legal. It was soaked in booze, you set it on fire, it burned for— It burned for a while.

**Justin:**

A good while, right?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. It burned for a while.

**Justin:**

It burned for a while, I thought.

**Sydnee:**

It was great.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**



Um, it was also thought that maybe you could take some scarlet silk thread and tie it into exactly nine knots and then wear that down the front of your shirt and that would stop future nosebleeds.

**Justin:**

Probably not.

**Sydnee:**

I wondered if that was one of those like, like, you know, cures like kind of things, 'cause like if you had like a red string down the front of you tied in knots, it would kind of, like, it's like a whimsical, like, take on nosebleed.

**Justin:**

Like a fun kinky nosebleed.

**Sydnee:**

It sounds like something, like, that they, like an interpretation you'd see on, like, Project Runway of like, "It's like a nosebleed, but it's a— With red silk." And, like, Tim Gunn's looking on, looking very worried.

**Justin:**

Designers, it's perfect.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]. I don't know.

**Justin:**

It's genius.

**Sydnee:**

No, I think he'd be very worried about that. Uh, you could also try to find an ash tree, but it needs to be an ash tree that is either one, two, or three years old, no more, no less. And then cut some of the bark off of the one, two or three year old ash tree and apply that to the inside of your nose at exactly the minute that the sun enters Taurus.

**Justin:**

Like, I don't understand where these people find the time to do this in case of nosebleed. Just like, here's Justin. Here's Justin the Elder. Just wait for, like, a second and fine— And now it's over. Just like that.

**Sydnee:**

Justin, do you know how much like, okay. Let's say that, I don't know. I'm a doctor, except I didn't have to go to medical school, really, or know any medicine. There weren't any, like, real great books for me to study or any science behind anything I do. Do you know how much crazy stuff I could make up in that time? Like, if I was just making stuff up, these people had all the time in the world, they were just making it up!

**Justin:**

Yeah. That's fair.

**Sydnee:**

That'd be great and awful.

**Justin:**

It would be nice, though.

**Sydnee:**

It'd be awful. But I feel like it would really simulate me creatively, though.

**Justin:**

Yeah. You could really open yourself up to a lot of avenues of healing that may or may not work.

**Sydnee:**

In the 1700s, uh, there are two different French surgeons named, uh, Beloc and Beloq. And you can't see that one ends with a C and one ends with a Q, but they definitely do.

**Justin:**

Yeah. I'll bear a witness for you.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. Um, and they're both credited with the invention of, uh, like an instrument, a curved instrument that you could use to kind of place a plug in the back of your nose to stop bleeding that was coming from further back in your nose.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, a lot of bleeds come from more interiorly, more, uh, further front, but—

**Justin:**

Sure.

**Sydnee:**

But you could use this instrument to put something way back there and there's this huge dispute over which of these, um, which of these bright Frenchmen made this very clever device?

**Justin:**

[laughs].

**Sydnee:**

Uh, actually I saw it referenced as like the Belocq, with C and Q at the end.

**Justin:**

Sure. With like a little slash or just throw 'em both in there?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]. Just throw 'em both in there. Um, and it, it became one of the most illustrated medical devices for, like, 150 years in medical textbooks. One of the— You were sure to see a picture of Beloc's, you know, I don't know, whatever curve, nasal plug instrument.

Um, and so you'd think that this would be like a big deal, like, which, which French dude made this? They both want credit for it. But in reality it's almost— It was almost never used. So I don't even know why we care that much about who made it.

**Justin:**

Why was it halfway illustrated then you think?

**Sydnee:**

It just looked really great.

**Justin:**

Fun to draw.

**Sydnee:**

Was lovely. Yeah. We didn't have a lot of medical instruments so we drew what we had.

**Justin:**

Sure.

**Sydnee:**

Most docs just used, like, a catheter, 'cause it was a lot easier to just place that up there.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, in 1807, there's a description of a balloon made out of animal intestines that you could, like, stick up the nose and inflate and then that would apply pressure and stop bleeding. And throughout the 1800s you see even more, like, balloons created, caps, even, like, condoms, um, and then you start to see rubber used instead of animal intestines and this idea of, like, a balloon that you could inflate in the nose and that would apply like pressure all the way around—

**Justin:**

Okay, so...

**Sydnee:**

Would be more helpful.

**Justin:**

...I give up. Like what are we, so what do I actually, actually, really do?

**Sydnee:**

Okay. So let's say, that you do have a nosebleed. One, um, well, one, how about, let's try to avoid it first.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So to avoid having a nosebleed, uh, you want to keep the inside of your nose moist, especially this time of year, like, the heat in our houses makes the air really dry and that makes you more prone to nosebleeding. 'Cause there are a lot of blood vessels inside your nose and that skin, it's a very fragile area.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And so those vessels can bleed easily with some irritation or dryness. So, like, just, um, just plain, like, saline nasal spray can be helpful.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

You know? Not that, no, don't use that Afron. Nope. Just, like, nasal— Just, like, nasal saline. Um, keep your blood pressure controlled. So if you've got high blood pressure, keep it controlled.

**Justin:**

Maybe do— There's probably better reasons to do that even than not getting a nosebleed.

**Sydnee:**

But you could make that argument. Um, also don't stick stuff up there.

**Justin:**

Hey.

**Sydnee:**

A lot of nosebleeds are caused by local trauma. So you know, like, fingers.

**Justin:**

Get that out of there.

**Sydnee:**

Get it outta there. Just don't stick— Don't stick stuff up your nose! Or in your ear.

**Justin:**

Hey, get it out of there. Sawbones.

**Sydnee:**

Um, you should... Now let's say that that doesn't work and you do get a nosebleed, uh, you should apply pressure and lean forward. Don't lean back.

**Justin:**

Okay. But leaning, I wanted to ask you about this when I heard we were doing the topic. Is this, like, a recent, I mean probably not recent development, but, like, has this been in flux or whatever 'cause, like, I have very clear memories of being a kid and everybody leaning back.

**Sydnee:**

I just— I think people didn't— I just think people don't know.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

No, because I mean you don't wanna swallow all that blood. You know? I mean, that's the thing—

**Justin:**

I mean, yeah, I understand why now.

**Sydnee:**

Like you're not leaning— You're not leaning forward because that's going to stop the bleeding faster. The pressure is what's gonna stop the bleeding, hopefully, that's the plan. Um, it's the blood that is gonna flow until, you know, until the pressure works. You don't wanna swallow it 'cause it'll make you— It makes you feel sick.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

I mean it's [crosstalk]...

**Justin:**

It's not good for you either, right?

**Sydnee:**

Like, swallowed blood— I mean, it's not gonna— It's not gonna kill you. It's not gonna hurt you to swallow, but it just makes you— You're gonna get really sick to your stomach, probably.

**Justin:**

So you heard it here first, lean forward or lean your head back. It does not make that much of a difference.

**Sydnee:**

No, just don't swallow that blood, you're gonna get sick. Just lean forward. Um, if you are on, like, a blood thinner that would make you bleed more easily or for longer, um, or if the nosebleed doesn't stop, uh, go see a doctor. Um, because it is important when you are bleeding that it stops at some point. Remember that. Uh, we have these great little rhino rockets, which are—

**Justin:**

What's that?

**Sydnee:**

They're sort of, like, tampons that you stick up your nose.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and we have other more sophisticated, like, nasal tampon-like devices. There are balloons that are inflated. You can use things that are sort of like the catheters we use for bladders that have, like, little balloons on 'em, similar to that that you can stick up in your nose and inflate and that'll apply pressure.

It's just different ways of applying local pressure. Um, there are a lot of different ones that are, you know, fancier. Um, if all else fails, we can do stuff, like, cauterized, like, burn some things on the inside of your nose to stop it. Or we can even do procedures where we embolize, which means, like, we clot off, like, intentionally put a little embolus, like a little clot, inside a blood vessel to make it stop bleeding.

Um, that's not usually the first stop. That's, like, a last resort, but we can do that kind of thing. Um, 'cause we— I mean we hospitalize people for nosebleeds.

**Justin:**

You mentioned a nasal tampon. Couldn't you use— Could you use, like, a regular tampon?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, you could, um... I would not advise— If it is to the point that you're thinking about sticking a tampon up your nose, I would go see— I would go seek help. Um, because one, that's not, like, that's not a good thing to have to do for a longer period of time. You know how we talk about, like, toxic shock syndrome and things from, like, leaving tampons in too long?

**Justin:**

Sure.



**Sydnee:**

You can, like, there are similar things if you leave something up your nose too long.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Like, you just, in general, don't wanna stick things into orifices and leave them blocked off for a long period of time. So if you're bleeding enough that you're, like, I'm gonna stick this tampon up my nose, just, like, come see me.

**Justin:**

Go see a doctor.

**Sydnee:**

Come, yeah, let me help. Let me help you out.

**Justin:**

Uh, exciting news! [imitates trumpet] This is an exciting news break from Justin McElroy and Sydnee McElroy. So you remember the Sawbones podcast episodes featuring Sydnee and her sister Riley.

**Sydnee:**

Also known as probably, like, your favorite episodes.

**Justin:**

Your favorites episodes. Well, those two cats have finally done it. They're making, uh, a, um, podcast of their very own. Sydnee, 30 seconds, tell us about it. Give us the elevator pitch.

**Sydnee:**

So our podcast is called Still Buffering. It's a sister's guide to teens through the ages. Um, and it is basically Riley and I sharing information about, uh, our experiences as teenagers then and now. And hopefully I give her a little

sage advice with, uh, hard earned wisdom through the years that she can benefit from. And in exchange, she tells me what's, you know, cool today.

**Justin:**

These are, uh, we got another show in the McElroy line called Shmanners hosted by my brother, Travis and his wife Teresa who's kind of, uh, etiquette expert. I think you can call her that. And, uh, it is a show about etiquette. Both of those are launching next week.

Still Buffering is gonna be on Tuesday. Shmanners will also have an episode Tuesday, but typically it'll be Friday. But Still Buffering will be every Tuesday, uh, and that is on the Maximum Fun Network. You could find it right now. They've got a little, like, a little teaser up. You can get that at iTunes, just search for Still Buffering. And if you like what you hear after the Tuesday episode, a rating or a review would be awesome.

**Sydnee:**

And if you like the art for Still Buffering, my other sister Teylor did that.

**Justin:**

So it's— There you go. It's a family affair here. Uh, so make sure you get Still Buffering and Shmanners, uh, you can go subscribe to both of 'em right now. So don't wait and, uh, thanks maximumfun.org for being so kind to us and letting us hang out in their, uh, palatial podcasting...

**Sydnee:**

Universe.

**Justin:**

... universe, if you will. Uh, and thanks to the Taxpayers for letting us use your song, Medicines, as the intro and outro of our program, and I think that's gonna do it for us folks. Uh, my name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

And as always don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays]

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