

Nasal Sinus Irrigations

Importance of nasal-sinus care

People with nasal symptoms often have swollen nasal passages and an increased amount of mucus. When the nose swells and is unable to drain, the following may occur:

- Nasal congestion
- Blocked or aching ears
- Ear infections
- Sinus infection
- Post nasal drip (mucus down the back of the throat)
- Sore or scratchy throat
- Asthma symptoms
- Cough

Nasal –sinus irrigations are safe. They wash out mucus, irritants, dust, germs, and allergy –causing particles. Nasal sprays will not work as well if the nose is filled with mucus.

Saline preparations

Nasal-sinus irrigations are done with salt water (saline). Sterile saline may be found at your pharmacy in one liter bottles. A less expensive method is to make it yourself.

- **Home preparation:** The Center of Disease Control recommends the use of sterile water, distilled water, bottled water or boiled tap water (let cool). Use one cup of warm water (neither cold nor hot) and add 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon of table salt (non-iodized salt is recommended) and a pinch of baking soda.

Methods

- **Spray bottle:** This is a “ready made” saline for nasal irrigation (for example, Ocean, Ayr). Spray the saline into the nasal passage several times while gently sniffing in. If you feel the saline going down the back of your throat, you are doing it correctly. Spit the saline out.
- **Bulb syringe:** An all-rubber ear (bulb) syringe. Cut off the tip until it fits snugly inside the nostril. Fill it completely with saline and lean over the sink with your head down. Insert the tip just inside the nostril and gently squeeze the bulb. The saline runs down the back of your throat. Spit the saline out.
- **Eyedropper:** Used for very small children. Put several drops of saline into each nostril and gently suction with a bulb syringe or have the child blow his/her nose thoroughly if he/she is old enough. Do not have the child lying down on his back when this is done.
- **Sinus Rinse:** Available at local pharmacies and grocers. You may also order the kit by calling NeilMed at 1-877-477-8633. This kit contains a squeeze bottle with a cap and a tube, and several premixed packets of saline and sodium bicarbonate. Available in adult and pediatric sizes.
- **Neti Pot:** Available at local pharmacies and grocers. The kit contains a container and instructions.