

# ENT SURGICAL CONSULTANTS

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## NASAL SALINE IRRIGATION (4/14)

Your doctor recommends that you irrigate your nose at least 2 or more times each day with this special solution. We also encourage the use of over the counter nasal saline sprays (*Ocean, Ayr, Natruvent*, etc, but this does not substitute for the beneficial effects of this high volume nasal irrigation as outlined below.

### Proven Benefits

- Washes away allergens, dust, dirt, and pollens.
- Increases mucus flow out of the nose and clears sinus passages.
- Improves breathing by pulling fluid out of swollen mucous membranes.
- Reduces nasal swelling and other upper respiratory problems.
- Helps prevent sinus infection

### Correct Nasal Wash Technique

- Wash your hands.
- Make the nasal wash solution.
- Do not use tap water for the nasal wash (unless boiled or filtered as described below). Do not use well-water.
- You may use:
  - Distilled water,
  - Sterilized water,
  - Tap water that has been boiled for 1 minute (at elevations above 6,500 ft., boil for 3 minutes) and cooled or
  - Tap water that is filtered using a filter with an absolute pore size of 1 micron or smaller.
- Whichever water you use to make the saline solution replace container or water at least weekly.
- To make the saltwater solution, mix one-half teaspoon uniodized ("pickling/canning") salt in an 8-ounce glass of water (described above). Uniodized salt is used because iodized salt may be irritating when used over a long period of time. Add a pinch of baking soda. A pinch is a small amount you can pick up between two fingers. If you are congested, use the entire 8 ounces of saltwater during the nasal wash; otherwise, 4 ounces should be enough.
- The recipe for a larger quantity would include 1 to 1.5 heaping teaspoons of uniodized salt and 1 rounded teaspoon of baking soda (pure bicarbonate) in one quart of water.
- Discard any unused saltwater and prepare a new saltwater solution before the next nasal wash.

### Position for the Nasal Wash

- Adults and older children - Lean far over the sink with your head down.
- Younger children - If possible, have your child lean as far over the sink as possible. A small child may have trouble cooperating with a nasal wash and may need to be held and assisted. Ask your health care provider about ways to hold a small child when doing a nasal wash.

### Techniques for Adults and Older Children

- **Sinus Rinse Kit Technique (preferred technique)** - The Sinus Rinse Kit comes with a Sinus Rinse bottle and mixture packets. When using the Sinus Rinse Kit you can use the prepared mixture packets that come with the kit or you can make your own nasal wash solution described above. The Sinus Rinse bottle is filled with saltwater. The bottle is placed against the nostril. After the bottle is squeezed, saltwater comes out the opposite nostril and may come out the mouth. The nose is then blown gently. The procedure is then repeated with the other nostril. Smaller sized bottles come in the Sinus Rinse Pediatric Kit.
- **Bulb Syringe Technique** (alternate technique) - Use a large all-rubber ear syringe. An ear bulb syringe can be purchased at most pharmacies. Fill the syringe completely with the saltwater. Insert the syringe tip just inside your nostril and pinch your nostril around the tip of the bulb syringe to keep the solution from running out your nose. Gently squeeze the bulb to swish the solution around in your nose; then blow your nose lightly. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril.

- **Water Pik® Technique** (alternate technique) - Use a Water Pik® with a Sinus Irrigator Tip. Pour the saltwater into the water reservoir and set the Water Pik® at the lowest possible pressure. Insert the tip just inside your nostril and allow the fluid to run out of your mouth or other nostril. Blow your nose lightly. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril.
- **Hand Technique** (alternate technique) - Use your hands for this technique. Pour some saltwater into your palm. Sniff the liquid up your nose, one nostril at a time. Blow your nose lightly. This technique may not be as effective but may be used in some situations.
- **Techniques For Babies - Babies** - Use Nasadrops™ or a saline spray for doing a nasal wash with a baby. Place a small amount of the saltwater in your baby's nostril. Use a bulb syringe to suction the mucus from your baby's nose. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril. Ask your health care provider to show you how to do this.
- With any technique, the saltwater solution may get into the mouth during the nasal wash and leave a salty taste. You may want to rinse the mouth with water after the nasal wash.

### **Cleaning the Equipment**

- You must thoroughly clean the equipment used for a nasal wash to prevent the growth of bacteria. It is important for each family member to have his/her own bulb syringe or nasal adaptor.

### **Cleaning the Sinus Rinse Bottle**

- After each use put a small amount of dishwashing detergent in the bottle. Add water (described above). Secure the cap with the tube onto the bottle. Shake the bottle. Rinse the bottle, tubing and cap with water. Shake off any excess water and allow the pieces to dry on a clean towel.
- If you feel the system is discolored or contaminated clean the bottle, cap and tubing with rubbing (70 percent isopropyl) alcohol or white, distilled vinegar (1 part vinegar to 3 parts water). After the use of either solution, rinse the pieces well with water and shake off the excess water. Again, allow the pieces to dry on a clean towel. You may also place the bottle tubing and cap in the microwave for 1.5 – 2 minutes.
- The Sinus Rinse bottle is not cleaned well using the dishwasher.
- Replace the Sinus Rinse bottle every 3 months or if it becomes discolored.

### **Cleaning the Bulb Syringe (dropper, syringe or nasal spray bottle)**

- After each use (which may be several times a day) fill the bulb syringe with water (described above), swish the water around, and empty the bulb syringe completely. Always suspend the bulb syringe tip-down in a clean glass to allow the bulb syringe to drain completely. Do not allow the bulb tip to sit in a puddle of water.
- In addition to rinsing the bulb after each use, clean the bulb daily with rubbing (70 percent isopropyl) alcohol. Draw the rubbing alcohol into the bulb syringe. Swish the liquid around, and empty the bulb syringe. Again, suspend the bulb syringe tip-down in a clean glass to allow it to drain completely.
- If you have any questions about these nasal wash techniques please ask your health care provider. Your health care provider can discuss which technique is best for you.

### **If You Use a Nasal Steroid Spray**

- You should always use this irrigation mixture before you use your nasal steroid spray (i.e., *Flonase, Nasacort, Nasonex, Rhinocort*, etc). These steroids work better when sprayed onto nasal membranes that have been cleaned and decongested by the saline irrigation.
- Steroid sprays also work better if you direct the spray up and out towards the outer part of the nose.