

How to Rinse the Nose with Salt Water

This sheet explains how to rinse your nose or your child's nose with a special salt water and baking soda mixture. It includes the recipe for making this mixture.

The benefits of rinsing the nose with salt water

- When you rinse the nose with this salt water and baking soda mixture, you wash crusts, thick mucus, and other debris from the nose and sinus openings.
- Salty water pulls fluids out of swollen tissue, which decongests the nose and improves air flow. This makes breathing easier and helps open the sinus passages.
- This salt water and baking soda mixture helps the nose membranes move mucus faster.

The recipe for the salt water and baking soda mixture

1. Carefully clean a 1-quart glass jar. Rinse well.
2. Fill the clean jar with distilled water or previously boiled water.
3. Add 2 or 3 heaping teaspoons of pickling salt, canning salt, kosher salt, or sea salt. You can ask for these at the grocery store. **Do not use table salt.** Table salt has additives you don't want in your nose rinse.
4. Add 1 rounded teaspoon of baking soda (pure bicarbonate).

5. Stir or shake before each use.
6. Store at room temperature.
7. After a week, pour out any mixture that is left and make a new batch.

NOTE: If the mixture seems *too strong*, use the same amount of baking soda but less salt; try 1½ to 2 teaspoons of salt. For children, **start** with the smaller amount of salt. Gradually increase to 2 to 3 teaspoons of salt, or whatever your child will accept.

How to rinse the nose

- Make the salt water and baking soda mixture according to the recipe above.
- Consider rinsing the nose after exposure to dust, mold, allergens, smoke, or other irritants or pollutants.
- You may also purchase sinus rinse kits over-the-counter at your local pharmacy. There are many varieties to choose. They will include a saline rinse bottle and pre-measured packets to mix the salt and baking soda mixture with water. You can use one of these purchased bottles, a bulb/ear syringe, or a large medical syringe (30 ml).

Instructions

1. Pour some of the mixture into a clean bowl.
2. Fill the rinse bottle or syringe with the mixture from the bowl. **Do not put your used syringe into the jar with your mixture because it will contaminate your weekly supply.**

3. To warm the solution, place the rinse bottle or syringe under warm running water, set the rinse bottle or syringe in a sink or bowl filled with warm water, or add a small amount of warm water to the mixture. **NEVER** use solution that is hot to the touch.
4. In the shower or over the sink, lean forward, tilt your head to the left, and gently seal the tip of the rinse bottle in your right nostril. Point the bottle tip or stream toward the back of the throat. **DO NOT POINT** the tip or stream upward.
5. Take a deep breath and begin slowly blowing air out of the open nostril. You may find it helpful to seal your throat with your tongue as if you were gargling or holding your breath.
6. **Gently squeeze the bottle**, pushing a little water into one nostril as you blow it out the other side.
7. While you are still leaning forward, tilt your head to the right and repeat the procedure, pushing a little water into the left nostril, blowing it out the right.

Most people notice a mild burning feeling the first few times they use the mixture. This is normal; this sensation will usually go away with repeated use.

For young children

- You can put the mixture in a small spray container, like a saline spray or nasal steroid spray bottle.
- Squirt into each side of the nose several times.

- Always have the child upright to prevent choking. Do not force your child to lay down. Rinsing the nose is easier when sitting or standing.

If you use a nasal steroid spray such as Flonase[®], Nasonex[®], Rhinocort[®], Veramyst[®], Nasacort[®], or Omnaris[®]:

- Always use the salt water mixture **first**. Wait about 10 minutes and then use your nasal steroid spray. The nasal steroid reaches deeper into the nose and sinuses when it is sprayed onto clean, decongested nasal tissues.

Additional information

Nasal Congestion



A Stepwise Approach to Keeping the Child's Nose Open and Clear

Keeping the nose or nasal airway open and clear is an important step in reducing and preventing asthma symptoms. The nose is the filter to the lungs and helps to trap or filter out infections, smoke, mold spores, animal dander and other debris carried in the air we breathe. A blocked nasal airway can cause nasal

congestion due to swelling of the lining of the nose. This can make children cough, especially when lying down. People with asthma often have trouble with nasal congestion and sinus infections. For many years, it has been known that swimming in the ocean (and getting salt water into the nose) reduces nasal congestion and the risk of sinus infections. Water with no salt or only a small amount of salt does not offer the same benefits. Hypertonic salt water is like ocean water.

The benefits of rinsing the nose with hypertonic salt water:

- 1) Clear debris from the nose. When you rinse the nose with hypertonic salt water, you wash crusts, thick mucus, and other debris from the nose and sinus openings.
- 2) Reduce nasal congestion. Salty water pulls fluids out of swollen tissue, which decongests the nose and improves air flow. This makes breathing easier and helps open the sinus passages.
- 3) Hypertonic saline helps the nose membranes move mucus faster.

It can be difficult to get infants and young children to cooperate with the use of hypertonic saline. However, the effort is well worth it!! It takes practice and encouragement

for children to become comfortable. Start slowly. Be consistent.

For Infants and Toddlers: start with use of a nasal mist. To use nasal mist, spray a gentle stream into one nostril. Repeat on other side. Toddlers may be able to stand up and lean forward over a sink for this. Use of bulb suction after spraying nasal mist can help pull thick secretions from the nasal airway. This will minimize the amount of nasal secretions which drain down the back of the throat.

Hypertonic nasal washes are the best way to open and clear the nasal airway. Children as young as toddlers can learn how to do this technique. Start slowly. For younger children, start with getting them used to the nasal rinse bottle. Once the child is comfortable with the bottle, start with lukewarm hypertonic saline in the bottle. Encourage the child to lean forward and blow out the nose before squeezing the bottle. GENTLY squeeze the bottle. Clap and applaud your child's effort. Repeat the effort to each nostril. Remember, the child's technique will improve with practice. If the child is unable to tolerate nasal washes even with consistency, encouragement, and practice, using a nasal mist is better than doing nothing at all.

The child's provider may also recommend antihistamines to be used for a short period of one week to help with nasal congestion. Antihistamines prevent or reduce the symptoms

caused by histamines which cause itching, sneezing, runny noses and watery eyes. If these treatments are not effective, the family should make an appointment for further testing for infections, allergy, or acid reflux.

