

Nasal and Sinus Irrigations (Isotonic Saline)

Purpose

Nasal and sinus irrigations help to remove crusts, dried blood, clots, mucus, etc. from the nose. In addition, these irrigations may also decrease the swelling in the nasal and sinus linings. These irrigations are often used on a long-term basis to keep the nose and sinuses clean. You can purchase a bottle and saline packets at any pharmacy or you can make your own (see below).

Isotonic Saline

1 teaspoon of canning/pickling salt (not table salt)

1/2 teaspoon of baking soda

1 quart of water (tap water OK; bottled or distilled water OK; not well water)

Directions

- Use a large piston-type syringe (also known as an irrigating syringe) or a nasal squeeze bottle (see below). Avoid bulb-type syringes.
- Place the tip of the syringe (or squeeze bottle) at the nostril and irrigate with the saline mixture. The irrigation should be rigorous, since it cleans the nose by mechanically removing debris, crusts, mucus, etc. The irrigation should be forceful – like washing dirt from a driveway with water from a hose.
- Irrigate each nostril with 1 cup of the saline mixture 3-4 times per day.
- After each irrigation, simply wash the syringe (or squeeze bottle) with ordinary tap water and mild soap. Let the syringe air-dry. Separate the barrel and piston of the syringe for cleaning.
- When the syringe (or squeeze bottle) becomes permanently soiled or if it becomes difficult to use, replace it with a new one.
- If using for ≥ 3 months, please dispense of your bottle and obtain a new one.

