

Saline Nasal Sprays & Irrigation

How do saline nasal sprays work?

Saline nasal sprays add moisture to the nasal passages, especially during the winter when it's cold and dry outside but hot and dry inside. When your nasal passages are dry, mild nasal crusting may occur, and bacterial infections can develop under these crusts. Saline sprays clean the nasal passages of crusts and mucus and also help the natural cleaning system of your nasal passages.

Where can I buy saline nasal sprays?

You can buy saline sprays over-the-counter at most drug stores. Some national brands include: Saline, Ocean Spray and Ayr. Many pharmacies and stores carry their own brands. Many pharmacies such as Meijer, Walgreen's also carry preservative-free saline sprays.

Are there any side effects?

Nasal sprays may sting slightly. Sometimes the preservative in the saline spray may cause irritation. If this happens, use "Simply Saline®", a preservative free saline spray.

How does saline irrigation work?

Nasal irrigation uses a larger amount of saline, than saline spray. Saline nasal irrigation does more than add moisture to your nose; it also rinses out mucus secretions and crusts.



To irrigate your nasal passages, use a bulb syringe (such as the one used to clear the nasal passages of babies) or neti pot.

To make your own nasal irrigation solution, mix:

¼ tsp. of kosher or pickling salt

¼ tsp. baking soda

8 oz. of warm tap water

(1 tsp. of salt, 1 tsp baking soda per 32 ounces of water)

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Tap water may have some bacteria so you may choose to use distilled water instead. Boil the distilled water and store in a refrigerator until you add the salt and baking soda.

You can also buy commercial products such as the NeilMed “Sinus Rinse®” system (available at the University of Michigan Outpatient Pharmacy, Walgreen’s, and Meijer’s), or SinuCleanse® which come with single use salt packets.

How do I do saline irrigation?

Use 8-16 ounces of solution in each nasal cavity 1-2 times daily, or as often as you need.

- Lower your head over a sink and turn your head so that your left nostril is down.
- Pour solution from the container into your right nostril.
- Water will drain from your left nostril into the sink.
- Gently blow your nose.
- Repeat the same process for other nostril.

Breathing through your nose during irrigation will prevent a mess and minimize the amount of solution that enters the throat. Use only enough pressure to move the solution to the back of your nose so it comes out through your mouth or nose. Once you get used to irrigating you will not feel major discomfort.

Prepare fresh solution each day and clean the bulb syringe or rinse bottle after each use.

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