



## NASAL SALINE (SALTWATER) RINSES

Your doctor has recommended the use of saline (salt water) nasal rinses. Nasal rinses have been used for centuries for the treatment of nasal and sinus infection, bothersome secretions, allergy, and nasal dryness. It is safe and effective for use in both children and adults. Daily rinsing of the nasal passages with saline promotes nasal and sinus health by washing away dried mucus, infected secretions, dust, pollen, and mold spores, by moisturizing the nasal lining, promoting normal mucus flow, and naturally decongesting inflamed tissues. Rinses also help with clearing dried blood, mucus, and infection after sinus surgery and promote rapid healing of tissue in this setting. In the beginning it is normal to have some difficulty with performing nasal rinses, but with practice, most people find that it becomes part of their normal routine just as much as brushing teeth or showering, and often, most wouldn't think of leaving home without it.

**RINSE INGREDIENTS:** No special tools are required for nasal saline rinses, and everything that you need can be picked up at your local pharmacy and grocery. Commercial saline rinses and syringe systems such as NeilMed SINUS RINSE™, Ayr Saline Nasal Rinse, or Neti Pot™ are available, but these may contain preservatives or other irritants, and it is often less expensive and more convenient to make it at home. You will need the following:

1. Distilled water (tap water contains irritating minerals and bacteria, but may be used if boiled)
2. Kosher, pickling, or non-iodized table salt (regular table salt contains iodine, an irritant)
3. Baking soda (not baking powder)
4. Corn syrup (optional, for additional moisturizing effect)
5. White vinegar (for antiseptic effect, if recommended by your doctor)
6. An airtight container for mixing saline rinse
7. Rubber bulb syringe (like those used to clear infant noses and ears)
8. Household bleach (for cleaning container and bulb syringe)

**PREPARATION:** To prepare the rinses, measure out 1 quart (1 liter) of distilled or boiled tap water into the mixing container. Then add 2-3 heaping teaspoons of salt and 1 teaspoon of baking soda, mix to dissolve, and place in the refrigerator for 1-2 days of storage. You may add 3-4 tablespoons of corn syrup if you experience nasal dryness. If your doctor recommends it, add 1 teaspoon of white vinegar to this mixture as well.

**STORAGE & CLEANING:** It is advised that you make up fresh rinse every day or two, and that you keep the unused rinse in the refrigerator in an airtight container to prevent bacterial growth. Set out enough rinse for your next use well in advance to let it come to room temperature before use. Wash the container and bulb syringe at least once a week in a quart of water with 2 tablespoons of bleach, rinse and dry to prevent bacterial growth.

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**USING SALINE RINSES:** To perform nasal saline rinses, plan on using at least 1 pint (2 cups) twice daily. Lean over a sink or other basin (some people prefer to do this in the shower as it can be messy, especially when you first start) to catch the rinse as it drains from your nose and mouth. Fill the bulb syringe with the rinse solution and place it into the nostril on one side. Gently squeeze the bulb to flush the nasal passage until the rinse drains clear. Repeat on the other side. You should plan on using the rinses twice a day, which should take about 10 minutes to perform.

**OTHER MEDICATIONS:** If your doctor has prescribed other nasal spray medications, such as a nasal steroid, it is best to apply these after the nasal rinse so that you do not wash the medication away. It is also safe to continue with your other antihistamine or decongestant medications that your doctor may have prescribed in addition to the saline rinses. If you have an allergy or adverse reaction to any of the ingredients do not use it in the preparation of the saline rinses.

**WHEN TO CALL US:** Stop the rinses and notify your doctor if you experience severe pain in the nose or ears, bleeding, or any other problems with the use of the nasal saline rinses. It is normal, especially in the beginning, to experience drainage of saline and nasal secretions into the throat. This is best avoided by holding your breath and leaning forward when using the rinses. Experienced users often will have the rinse exit the opposite nostril without drainage into the throat at all, and this can be achieved by most people with practice. Please call us if you have any additional questions or concerns.

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