



ENT

Associates

Making sense of your family's
hearing, sinus and throat problems

Sinus Irrigation / Rinse

Sinus irrigation is a simple, homeopathic treatment that flushes out clogged nasal passages and sinuses using a saltwater solution, and can benefit patients who have sinus problems, nasal allergies, colds, and even flu symptoms. Safe for adults and kids, the saline solution rinses out mucous and allergens, restores moisture, and eases inflammation/swelling of the mucous membranes that line the sinuses, so it's easier to breathe. Sinus irrigation is often recommended to compliment other sinus treatments because it is safe, effective and well tolerated by most patients. **NOTE: Nasal irrigation should be avoided when one side of the nose is completely blocked or when an ear infection is present.**



Decide what you'll use. There are several options for nasal irrigation. The most common irrigation devices are the Neti pot, a bulb syringe, and squeeze bottle. All the methods are simple and effective, and available over the counter at most drug stores.

Mix the saline solution. If you choose a prefilled bottle, skip this step. Otherwise, you can buy a saline solution powder (e.g. Neilmed© Sinus Rinse™) and follow the directions on the label. Or, to make your own solution, start with 2 cups of warm water that's distilled or that you've boiled to help prevent infection. Add 1 to 2 teaspoons of non-iodized salt (e.g. pickling or sea salt; NOT table salt) and one-half teaspoon of baking soda. Mix thoroughly.

Get in position. Lean forward over the sink, at about a 45-degree angle. Tilt your head so that one nostril is pointed down toward the sink. Don't tilt your head back.

Pour the saline solution. Place the spout of a Neti pot or the tip of a bulb syringe or squeeze bottle just inside your nose. The tip should go in no further than a finger's width. Keeping your mouth open, gently squeeze the bulb syringe or bottle, or tilt the pot to pour the water into your nostril. Remember to breathe through your mouth, not your nose.

Let it drain. The saltwater will run through your nasal passages and drain out of your other nostril and maybe your mouth depending on the severity of the congestion. If some does go down your throat, it won't hurt you, but spit out as much as possible.

Clear your nose and repeat. Gently blow your nose to clear out the remaining solution. Repeat the procedure with your other nostril. The nose should be irrigated 2-3 times per day. Make additional saline solution as needed.

Clean your device. When you're done, throw away any leftover solution and thoroughly clean the items you used. Let them air dry in a clean, dry place. Replace your rinse device every 3-4 months or sterilize it in the microwave.

MEDICATED RINSES:

Your physician may instruct you to acquire and add supplemental medication to your saline rinse. Always start with the base saline solution and then follow your doctor's or pharmacy's instructions.

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