

Patient information for Nasal Saline Irrigation

Who is this information for?

This information is for patients, families and carers who have been advised to use nasal saline irrigation.

Why use saline irrigation in the nose?

Rinsing the nasal passages with a salt water solution assists in ridding the nose of allergens, mucus and crusting. It may be recommended after nasal surgery or long-term to manage your nose and sinus symptoms.

What is required to perform nasal saline irrigation?

Different pre-mixed salt packages and irrigation devices are available on the market.



N.B. MEG has no affiliation with any brand or nasal irrigation product

Alternatively you can make your own saline by mixing the following ingredients:

- 1/2 teaspoon (or a pinch) of salt
- 1/2 teaspoon (or a pinch) of baking soda (bicarbonate of soda, sodium bicarbonate)
- 1 cup (or a commercial bottle or pot) of previously boiled water

You can store this homemade solution for three days at room temperature.

How do I perform nasal irrigation?

- Fill a large medical syringe, squeezable bottle or nasal cleansing pot with a homemade or pre-mixed saline solution.
- Lean forward over a sink.
- Insert the tip into your nostril and squeeze gently.
- Aim the stream of solution towards the back of your head and **not upwards the top**.
- Alternatively the solution can be sniffed up the nose from a cupped hand.
- The saline should go through the nose and out of the mouth or the other side of the nose.
- Blow your nose gently after the saline wash unless your health professional has instructed you not to.
- Repeat as recommended by your health professional.
- If you are using medicated sprays as well (**e.g. Nasal Steroids**), ensure you perform the sinus rinse **first**, and then apply the medicated spray, so as not to wash it away.

What other things should I know about nasal irrigation?

- Perform nasal irrigation prior to using your nasal medicines to help your nose and sinuses absorb the medication more effectively. After rinsing, it is recommended that you wait 30 to 60 minutes prior to using any medicated nasal sprays. Using nasal sprays sooner than this may make them less effective as the saline will continue to drain for a period of time.
- The saline solution can be slightly warmed prior to use to improve comfort.
- The saline solution may cause a burning feeling in your nose for the first few times you use it.
- If you have had previous sinus surgery, sometimes the sinus rinse settles in the open, sinus cavities, only to drain out of the nose at a later time, when you are bending over or lying down. This is of no concern, and in fact demonstrates that you have well opened sinus pathways.
- It is not recommended to perform sinus rinses within 60 minutes of going to bed, as saline may drain down the back of the throat and disrupt sleep.

Concerns or questions?

You can contact your ENT Specialist at the Melbourne ENT Group (MEG):

- Phone: 1300- 952-808
- Email: admin@melbentgroup.com.au
- Website: www.melbentgroup.com.au



Your GP is also the best contact for ongoing care and concerns.

 1300 952 808  (03) 9429 3627

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