

NASAL IRRIGATION

Although it sounds a bit unusual, this technique can be very helpful for patients with allergies, sinus problems, postnasal drip, and the common cold. It is sometimes possible to prevent early infection and worsening of nose symptoms by using this technique.

1. *Make an irrigation solution out of salt, soda and warm water. Start with 1/2 cup of common table salt and 1/2 cup of baking soda and mix them together dry. Store it in a plastic food container or jelly jar with a lid, to keep it dry and clean. Each time you need to make up a solution, take about 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of the dry salt/soda mix and put it in a plastic glass, add about 1 cup of warm water.*
2. *Buy a soft rubber bulb syringe (ear bulb syringe) at any drug store. (If you have one at home from when the children were babies, you may use it, but sterilize it first). Stand by the sink and fill the bulb syringe with the irrigating solution. Squeeze the bulb to force the solution first into one nostril and then the other using mild to moderate force. Simply squirt the salt and soda solution into the nose and let it drip out. Blow your nose gently to clear the secretions. Repeat the process and clear again. (You may also use a *Water Pik* with a special nasal irrigator tip). Clean the bulb syringe with a mild solution of bleach and water once a week.*
3. *Now, this is the hard part! Squeeze the bulb again with mild to moderate force, and as you squirt the solution into your nose, snuffle it all the way back through your nose and into your throat. Use short, sniffling, snorting actions to get the water through. It will go back into the back of your throat and may make you want to gag, simply clear your throat, spit it out and repeat.*
4. *When your nose is completely clear, blow and pat it dry. You may now use other nasal sprays, as prescribed by your doctor. Since your nose is now moist and clean, the sprays will not irritate and will provide better coverage and treatment.*
5. *Remember! NEVER blow your nose forcefully while holding it shut. This will build up pressure in your nose and sinuses and can be painful and dangerous. Just blow gently to clear the mucus and secretions from the nostrils.*
6. *"Wash and spray twice a day". Irrigate at least twice a day, in the morning and evening, followed by nasal sprays. For babies and young children, gently drop some water into the stuffy nose (no force), let it sit until the mucus is softened, and then suck it out with a bulb syringe, or clear it with a tissue.*
7. *This procedure is especially useful when you have symptoms as described, but you may use it routinely to keep yourself from becoming congested. If the solution stings or burns your nose, change the amount of salt and soda or the temperature of the water. Since this salt and soda solution resembles normal body fluids, it should feel completely neutral in your nose and should not cause irritation. In fact, the goal is to make your nose and sinuses feel better!*