

# Alabama Allergy and Asthma

*Specializing in Adult & Pediatric Allergic Illnesses*  
*Diplomate of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology*

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## NASAL WASHING INSTRUCTIONS

### Nasal-Sinus Hygiene

Nasal irrigations with saline are the single most effective and safest method to relieve the symptoms of acute or chronic rhinitis of any cause, including colds, allergies, and irritants. The goal of nasal washing is to keep the nasal passages open (reducing the swelling), and to wash out any mucous, allergens, irritants, and bacteria. Used in combination with nasal steroid sprays, most people have more relief of their chronic nasal symptoms than could be achieved with oral medications alone, with none of the side effects often associated with oral medications. Used on a regular basis, nasal irrigations will help prevent sinus infections, middle ear infections, and the growth of nasal polyps.

In patients with asthma and chronic bronchial disease, there is an added incentive to control symptoms involving the nose and sinuses. The drainage from the nose and sinuses may get into the lungs, especially at night, worsening the bronchial disease. To help prevent this, keeping the nose clean is essential.

### Saline Preparation

The solution is made fresh everyday, with one-fourth to one-half teaspoon of non-iodized table salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water, with a pinch of baking soda added. Make up in a clean glass or plastic bottle. Use one of the following methods. Alternatively, sterile saline in one liter bottles may be purchased from your pharmacy.

### Methods for Adults and Older Children

**Method 1:** Purchase a large all-rubber 2 ounce bulb syringe from a private drugstore (not available at "chain" drugstores, syringes with plastic tips are not useful). Fill syringe completely with saline solution. Lean far over sink with head down. Insert syringe tip just inside nostril. Gently squeeze bulb and release several times to swish solution around in nose, then squeeze bulb hard enough to make saline go up and over palate in roof of mouth and run out of mouth. Repeat for other nostril. While doing this, sniff air through open nostril to assist water in this direction.

**Method 2:** Buy a squeeze bottle of "Salinex", "Ocean", "Ayr" or a similar commercial saline solution. Insert the tip of the bottle into the nostril and close the other nostril with your finger, squeeze the bottle and inhale simultaneously. It is most successful when the fluid gets all the way back in the nose and comes into the back of throat. Repeat procedure for the other nostril. These containers may be reused by making your own saline mixture.

**Method 3:** Pour some saline into palm of hand and "snuff" up nose, one nostril at a time, then spit out mouth and blow nose lightly afterward. It is best done with head down, bent far over sink.

**Method 4:** Using a Water-Pik®, one may either purchase a Grossan Nasal Irrigator Tip® (available through some pharmacies and by mail from: HydroMed Inc, P.O. Box 91273, Los Angeles, CA 90009) or modify a standard Water-Pik® dental attachment. This is done by cutting off the right angle tip of the dental irrigator, smoothing the cord with sand paper and wrapping enough waterproofing plastic electrician's tape around the end, to build it up so it fits snug in the nostril, sealing it around the applicator. The Water-Pik® should be set at the lowest possible pressure. The tip should be inserted just inside nostril, with the head bent over sink and with mouth open, to allow fluid to run out the mouth or nose.

### **Method for Smaller Children**

Buy a squeeze bottle of "Salinex", "Ocean", "Ayr" or a similar commercial saline solution. Gently squeeze the solution in each nostril, one at a time. For older children (those who can blow their nose with coaching), have the child blow his nose after each squeeze. If necessary in younger children, use a bulb syringe to suction mucous. Salt water may be mixed using the recipe given above.

### **CLEANING THE EQUIPMENT**

#### **To Clean Bulb Syringe:**

- A. After each use, draw hot tap water into bulb syringe, swish and empty completely. Always stand bulb tip-down after rinsing (in a clean glass) to allow syringe to drain completely.
- B Daily: Fill bulb with fresh solution of mild detergent and hot water. Rinse well. Draw an unused portion of 70% isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol into syringe. Swish, then empty completely. Stand bulb tip-down to drain.

### **INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS**

The nose should be cleaned \_\_\_\_\_times per day by one of these methods. If there is yellow or green pus from the nose, this should be done up to \_\_\_\_\_times per day.

At least one cupful of saline should be used each time.