

Nasal Rinse - If Child Can Blow Nose

Definition

- People like to breathe through their nose. When it is congested or blocked, they are uncomfortable.
- Rinsing the inner nose with saline (salt water) and then blowing it brings the quickest relief.
- Most children can blow their nose by age 3 or 4.
- Until then they also need nasal suction. See the Nasal Suction handout.

Health Information

When to Use Nasal Rinses

Nasal rinse can be used to help treat:

- Stuffy nose symptoms.
- Colds and upper respiratory infections (URIs).
- Hay fever (nasal allergies).
- Sinus infections (viral and bacterial sinusitis).

Benefits

- Cleans out mucus (snot).
- Washes out dust and pollen.
- Washes out germs.
- Moisturizes a dry nose.
- Improves air flow.

Nasal Flushes (Neti-Pot technique)

- This is when saline is squirted in one nostril and it comes out the other side.
- Most kids hate nasal flushes, so they are not advised in this handout.
- Some teens accept them.
- Discuss the added benefits with your doctor.
- Technique: watch a video on how to do it.
- The saline solution used with nasal flushes must be sterile.
- Other names for this are nasal irrigation and nasal washes.

Care Advice

1. Key Points

- Saline (salt water) before blowing the nose gives best results when the nose is congested.
- Unblocking the nose will help your child breathe and sleep better.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Saline Water

- Saline (salt water) is essential to open a blocked nose. It will loosen up dried or sticky mucus so it can be blown out.
- You can buy saline nose drops or spray at drug stores or grocery stores. No prescription is needed.
- Backup: If you don't have saline, you can use distilled water, bottled water or safe tap water.

3. **Equipment Needed to Get Saline Water in the Nose**

- There are several devices to get the saline into the nose.
- The easiest is to buy a can of pressurized nasal saline mist.
- If you make your own saline solution, you will need to buy a small squeeze bottle or nasal irrigation syringe.
- For bottled water, use the same.
- Ask your pharmacist for help.

4. **Nasal Rinse Step-By-Step Instructions**

- If the nose is congested, nasal rinses can be done several times a day.
- Lean forward over the sink. Keep the forehead slightly higher than the chin.
- Place the tip (nozzle) of the container, syringe, or squeeze bottle into the nostril. Put it in about a half inch (12 mm).
- Pressurized can of saline spray: press on the release until the inside of the nostril is moist.
- Nasal syringe or squeeze bottle: Slowly squeeze some salt water into the nose.
- Squeeze and wiggle the lower nose several times before the liquid runs out.
- Gently blow the nose. This will clean out the water and mucus.
- Repeat these steps with the other nostril.

5. **How to Make Saline Solution**

- Preferred method: buy pre-made salt packets at the drugstore. Ask your pharmacist for help. Follow the directions on the packet.
- Mix it with sterile, distilled, or previously boiled tap water.
- Optional method: make your own nasal saline with this recipe: Add 1/2 teaspoon (3 grams) of non-iodized salt (sea salt) to 1 cup (8 oz. or 240 mL) of sterile water.
- Make a fresh supply of nasal saline each day.
- Most practical method: Buy a can of nasal saline mist.

Call Your Doctor If

- You have other questions or concerns
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child become worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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