



VALLEY ENT

EAR, NOSE, THROAT & ALLERGY

Nose and Sinuses General Information

This instruction sheet is designed to help you care for your **nose and sinuses**. The information is not entirely comprehensive, so if you have any questions, call our office at (559) 409-4720.

If you have a medical emergency call 911.

Nasal rinse kits (Sinus Rinse) are available over the counter usually in the cold and flu section (NeilMed is a common brand used). You can also make your own homemade saline rinse mix (see below).

How Do I Use The Rinse Bottle?

Step One: Prepare the Bottle

- Wash your hands thoroughly. Unscrew the top of the bottle, trying not to put your hands on the part that will go in your nose. Fill up with 8 ounces of warm water. Open and pour in the contents of the salt packet. Screw the top back on. Cover the top of the bottle. Shake/mix the bottle until the solution is well combined.

Step Two: Rinse the Nose

- Go to a sink. Lean head over the sink, tilting your chin a bit downwards.
- Choose a nostril to begin with. Put bottle up to that nostril and squeeze gently with your mouth open. Don't hold your breath.
- Squeeze half of the bottle into the first nostril.
- **Please note:** The water may come out of the opposite or same nostril, or out of the mouth—all of these are fine and normal!
- Once half of the bottle is gone, repeat on the opposite nostril.

Step Three: Clean Up

- Once the bottle is completely empty, sniff and gently blow your nose while leaning over the sink and moving your head side to side.
 - It's important to gently sniff to refrain from building up pressure, because blowing too hard can push fluid into your ears.
 - Some of the rinse water may be retained up in the nose after you are done. Leaning over the sink and gently blowing your nose side to side will assist in removing the remaining saline solution.
- Clean your bottle using one of the sterilization methods mentioned above and put it away.

Nasal Irrigation Information:

- Sinus Rinse is a saline (salt water) nasal wash used to treat rhinitis (inflammation of the lining of the nasal passages) and sinusitis (inflammation (swelling) of the sinuses).
- It cleans mucus, allergens (substances that can cause an allergic reaction) and irritants from the nose and sinuses.
- It reduces inflammation and may improve symptoms such as stuffy nose, runny nose, dry cough, facial pressure, facial pain and loss of smell/taste.
- A rinse kit contains sachets that are dissolved in water to create a nasal wash solution and a squeeze bottle that enables the solution to be administered into the nose effectively.
- Each sachet contains sodium chloride (salt) and sodium bicarbonate. The solution is isotonic (contains a similar concentration of salt to the human body) and pH neutral (similar pH to the human body).

Are Nasal Rinses Safe To Use?

- Nasal rinse kits are safe to use so long as they are properly sterilized.
- The devices themselves are not designed to go deeply into the nostrils, so they do not cause much irritation. However, the bottles can be a breeding ground for bacteria and/or fungus.
- We recommend cleaning the bottle with hot, soapy water or putting it in the dishwasher right before use. Some of the newer bottles are also microwave safe, and for these, one minute on high with a small amount of water in the bottom will do the trick.
- The water used can also grow bacteria, fungus or, in very rare cases, amoebas, which are single-celled organisms that can cause life-threatening infections in humans.
- To ensure your water is safe to use, the manufacture recommends using either distilled water, which you can buy from a pharmacy, or boiled water that has been cooled. All clean water should be used as soon as possible to reduce bacterial exposure.

Are There Any Side Effects?

- Saline nasal washes do not normally cause problems.
- Possible side effects include ear discomfort while rinsing, and drainage of leftover solution from the nose after rinsing. Both of these side effects can be avoided by following the instructions in the booklet in the pack.
- You may experience a temporary increase in nasal congestion, but this will usually improve with continued use.
- You should not swallow the solution, however if you do so accidentally, there is no harm as the amount of salt ingested in one swallow is low.

How Do I Get A Repeat Prescription?

- Rinse packets are classed as a medical device rather than a medicine, and they cannot be prescribed. You will be provided with your first pack in the clinic, but if you need a further supply you must purchase them online or in a pharmacy. There are several different types of rinse packets and you should make sure that you buy the isotonic.

Homemade Saline Rinse Mix:

- Make it by the gallon: mix 4 teaspoons of non-iodized salt in and 2 teaspoons of baking soda in 1 gallon of distilled water.
- Make it by the cup: mix 8 oz (1 NeilMed bottle) of distilled water with 1/4 tsp salt and 2 pinches of baking soda.