

SUMMIT ENT ASSOCIATES

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Nasal Saline Irrigation

The nose should be irrigated 1 hour before bedtime using the NeilMed Sinus Rinse Kit and distilled water. Distilled water can be purchased at WalMart for about 69 cents per gallon. For the first 2 weeks, administer the isotonic lavage every night. After the first two weeks, administer it every other night for an additional 2 weeks. After the initial 4 weeks of use, we suggest you continue lavaging 2-3 times per week to keep the sinuses clean. Think of it as the “dental floss” for your sinuses!

Stand over the sink and gently squirt the solution into the nose in such a fashion that you are able to spit some of the saline out of your mouth. **DO NOT SWALLOW THE SOLUTION.** This suggests that you are doing an adequate job of irrigating the entire nose. Aim the stream of solution as though you are trying to squirt the back of your head, **NOT** the top of your head. Use 4 ounces in the left nostril and 4 ounces in the right nostril. Do not force the solution into the nose. Gently squeeze with a fair amount of pressure. Tepid (warm) solution is preferred as it is much more comfortable to the sinus lining. After lavaging, gently blow your nose.

The benefits of isotonic saline irrigation are three-fold:

1. It is a solvent. It cleans mucous, crusts, and other debris from the nasal passages.
2. It decongests the nose. Because of the salt concentration, fluid is pulled out of the nasal mucosa membranes. This shrinks the membranes which improves nasal air flow and opens sinus passages.
3. It improves nasal drainage. Studies have shown that saltwater cleansing of the nasal membranes improves ciliary beating so that normal mucous is transported better from the sinuses through the nose and into the throat.

If you are using an intranasal steroid, such as Beconase, Vancenase, Flonase, Rhinocort, or Nasocort, you should always cleanse the nose first with the NeilMed solution before utilizing the intranasal steroid. The intranasal steroid is most effective when sprayed onto clean nasal membranes because it reaches deeper into the nose after cleansing. Use your intranasal steroid right before bedtime, at least 40-60 minutes after lavaging.

CAUTION: Patients on a restricted sodium (common salt) diet due to heart conditions should be especially careful not to swallow the solution during and after the rinses.

If you have a sinus CT Scan scheduled, discontinue irrigating 3 days before the test!

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call our office. Thank you.