

Nasal Wash Treatment

Why should you do a nasal wash?

Many people with asthma, or other lung problems also have nasal and sinus symptoms. Drainage from your nose and sinuses can make asthma worse, especially at night. A salt water nasal wash, or nasal irrigation, can help reduce this.

A nasal wash:

- Cleans mucus from the nose so medication can be more effective
- Cleans allergens and irritants from the nose
- Decreases swelling in the nose.

What is the correct nasal wash technique?

Wash your hands

Make the nasal wash solution

Make the saltwater, or saline, solution fresh for every nasal wash, using a clean glass. To make the saltwater solution, mix one-half teaspoon uniodized salt in an 8-ounce glass of warm water. Uniodized salt is used because Iodized salt may be irritating when used over a long period of time. Add a pinch of baking soda. A pinch is a small amount you can pick up between two fingers. If you are congested, use the entire 8 ounces of saltwater during the nasal wash; otherwise, 4 ounces should be enough. Discard any unused saltwater and prepare a new saltwater solution before the next nasal wash.

Position for the nasal wash

- **Adults and older children** - Lean far over the sink with your head down.
- **Younger children** - If possible, have your child lean as far over the sink as possible. A small child may have trouble cooperating with a nasal wash and may need to be held and assisted. You will be shown ways to hold a small child when doing a nasal wash. One technique is to wrap your small child in a blanket or towel with arms down while holding him/her.

Perform the nasal wash

Your clinician will discuss which of these several techniques may be best for you.

Techniques for adults and older children

- **Method 1** - Use a large all-rubber ear syringe. An ear bulb syringe can be purchased at most drug stores. Fill the syringe completely with the saltwater. Insert the syringe tip just inside your nostril and pinch your nostril around the tip of the bulb syringe to keep the solution from running out your nose. Gently squeeze the bulb to swish the solution around in your nose; then blow your nose lightly. Repeat the procedure for the other nostril.
- **Method 2** - Use a Water Pik® with a Grossan® Nasal Irrigator Tip. Pour the saltwater into the water reservoir and set the Water Pik® at the lowest possible pressure. Insert the tip just inside your nostril and allow the fluid to run out of your mouth or other nostril. Blow your nose lightly. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril.
- **Method 3** - Use your hands for this technique. Pour some saltwater into your palm, then sniff the liquid up your nose, one nostril at a time. Blow your nose lightly. This technique may not be as effective but may be used in some situations.

Techniques for babies and young children

- **Babies** - We recommend using an eye dropper or syringe (without the needle) for doing a nasal wash with a baby. Place 10 - 20 drops of the saltwater in your baby's nostril. Use a bulb syringe to suction the mucus from your baby's nose. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril.
- **Alternate small children** - For a small child who can blow his/her nose but doesn't cooperate with the bulb syringe technique (Method 1), use a nasal spray bottle instead. This method is not as effective, but serves as an option when you can't use the bulb syringe with your child. You can purchase a prepared saline solution over the counter or use a clean, empty plastic nasal spray bottle and fill it with the saltwater solution you make each time. Squeeze the saltwater inside your child's nostril and have your child blow his/her nose lightly. Repeat the procedure with the other nostril.

With any technique, the saltwater solution may get into the mouth during the nasal wash and leave a salty taste. You may want to rinse the mouth with water after the nasal wash.

How do you clean the equipment?

You must thoroughly clean the equipment used for a nasal wash to prevent the growth of bacteria. It is important for each family member to have his/her own bulb syringe or nasal adaptor.

Cleaning the bulb syringe (dropper, syringe or nasal spray bottle)

- After **each use** (which may be several times a day) fill the bulb syringe with hot water, swish the hot water around, and empty the bulb syringe completely. Always suspend the bulb syringe tip-down in a clean glass to allow the bulb syringe to drain completely. Do not allow the bulb tip to sit in a puddle of water.
- In addition to rinsing the bulb after each use, clean the bulb daily with rubbing (70 percent isopropyl) alcohol. Draw the rubbing alcohol into the bulb syringe. Swish the liquid around, and empty the bulb syringe. Again, suspend the bulb syringe tip-down in a clean glass to allow it to drain completely.

Cleaning the Grossan® nasal adaptor

Wipe the tip of the Grossan® nasal adaptor with a clean, wet cloth after each use. Once a week, clean the adaptor by flushing a weak chlorine bleach solution (one part bleach and nine parts water) through it. Rinse thoroughly by flushing with two or more cycles of fresh water.