

Sinus Rinsing

Background:

Nasal rinsing has a long history as a “complementary” therapy. Many people consider routine nasal rinsing to be as much a part of their personal hygiene as bathing and teeth brushing. The constant exposure to air pollution, second hand smoke, bacteria, and mucous forming diets makes this form of personal hygiene important.

Chronic low grade infection and/or inflammation in the nasal passages is very common today and can lead to a number of systemic problems throughout the body. This most commonly presents as chronic fatigue, but may also result in many other symptoms

Highly respected medical organizations (Cochrane Collaborative) have reviewed evidence on nasal rinsing and concluded that it is an appropriate adjunctive therapy for chronic rhinosinusitis.

Mixing Solution:

Mix 2 teaspoonfuls of sea salt with 1 teaspoonful of baking soda in a pint of luke-warm water. Make sure your water source is from safe well or public water supply. May use commercial water source. You may consider adding a 10-15 drops of goldenseal / Echinacea extract for antibacterial effect.

Rinsing Procedure:

Lean over the sink (about 45 degrees) so you are looking directly into the basin. Rotate your head (about 45 degrees) so that one nostril is above the other. Gently insert the spout of the nasal irrigation pot into the uppermost nostril so that it forms a comfortable seal. (Do not press the spout against the “middle”, or septum, of the nose)

Breathe through your mouth and raise the handle of the filled nasal irrigation pot so that the solution enters the upper nostril. In a few moments, the solution will begin to drain from the lower nostril. When the nasal pot is empty, exhale gently through both nostrils to clear them of excess solution and mucus. Gently blow your nose into a tissue.

Frequently Encountered Problems / Concerns:

Depending on how congested you are, it may take several times before the procedure runs smoothly. It may take several times before encrusted material is moistened and dislodged. Do NOT force things. Be patient.

The rinsing may produce uncomfortable burning or headaches the first few times. You can adjust the salt content to help improve this. Be Patient, after a few days these problems will pass and you will be on a path to better sinus health.

Eventually try rinsing solution through to the back of the throat and spit it out rather than having it run out the other nostril. This is generally more effective but also takes more time to become comfortable with.

To obtain maximum benefit, try committing to this procedure 4-5 times a week for up to 2 months.

-Dr. Kalsman.