

Nasal Lavage

The sinuses are designed to protect you against foreign invaders – such as bacteria, pathogens, allergens, pollutants, dust, and molds. When your sinuses are working well, you feel great. When they're not, they can make you miserable.

The nasal lavage is a simple and effective home treatment for the following complaints:

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| Sinus infections (acute or chronic) | Colds, flu |
| Nasal passage irritation | Allergies to inhaled substances |
| Nasal congestion | Ear infection or congestion |

Several different types of products can be used for nasal irrigation. The most basic are a bulb syringe, squeeze bottle, or neti pot. With these devices, the user manually pours or sprays a mixture of salt and water into the nostril. The fluid flows through the nasal cavity, up into the sinuses, and into the other nostril providing a mechanical rinsing of the passages. More high-tech nasal irrigation systems propel the solution into the nose, allowing the user to control the spray and pressure.

The basic technique with all the devices is the same, so choosing a system is largely a matter of personal preference. The most important thing is finding a technique that you can do and are willing to do.

- For acute problems, perform the nasal wash up to four times per day, until resolved.
- For chronic problems, it is usual to do the wash one or more times daily, continuing for several months.

Supplies (available at Sage):

The neti pot is specially designed with a spout that **holds 1 cup of water** and fits comfortably in one nostril. Alternatives you can use include a bulb syringe or a turkey baster, although using pressure to irrigate the sinuses can be painful and actually cause harm. It's best to allow gravity to move the fluid through the sinuses.



Salt—plain mineral/sea salt is best, as table salt contains preservatives and anti-caking substances you don't need in your sinuses. Salt water draws fluid out of tissues, therefore it can reduce swelling within the sinuses to help open the airway. Salt also has an anti-microbial action and is generally very soothing to mucus membranes. *Use filtered or bottled water.*

Directions:

The technique outlined below may seem unusual at first. However, once learned, you will quickly realize how beneficial this technique is for sinus problems.

- Locate a workable container and fill with lukewarm (body temperature) salt water. **The salt to water ratio is ½ teaspoon sea salt to one cup of warm filtered water.**
- Over a sink, tilt your head forward so you are looking directly toward the sink. Insert the spout into the right nostril. It is important to breathe through your mouth. Turn your head to the right and tilt it towards the sink. Let water move into the right nostril, up into the sinuses, and exit the left nostril. Normally, you will feel the water as it passes through your sinuses and you may taste it in your mouth. Simply spit it out and adjust the tilt of your head.
- Switch nostrils after ½ a cup of salt water has been used and repeat on the other side.
- To finish, expel any remaining water by gently blowing out through your nose. Avoid the temptation to block off one nostril, as doing so may force water into the eustachian tube of the ear.

Note: If you feel too much of a burning sensation in your nasal membranes, you may need to adjust the amount of salt you use (usually by adding a bit more). Alternatively, you may find that adding a pinch of baking soda helps relieve the burning.

If a sinus infection is suspected, you can use ½ tsp of **Silvercillin™** (silver complexed with purified water) in the mixture or try essential oil-infused salt.