

NASAL-SINUS HYGIENE

Why is it important?

Chronic nasal stuffiness and drainage is a relatively common problem, and occurs in persons both with and without allergies. In some cases these symptoms are associated with chronic disease of the nasal sinuses. Many patients with asthma also have some disease involving the nose and sinuses, and many of them report that deteriorations in their nasal/sinus disease is followed by worsening of their asthma. It is important to keep your nose clean and moist to keep it healthy.

The treatments we use may involve part of all of the following, depending on a particular patient's problem. The goal is to keep the nasal passages open by reducing nasal congestion, wash out any mucus, germs or any other irritating substances, and to allow better penetration of nasal medications. We recommend purchasing a commercial product rather than making your own. Getting the recipe wrong can cause irritation in your nose and make things worse.

Humidification in Winter

The cold winter months in Alberta often mean dry indoor air. We recommend you keep the relative humidity in your home at about 30%. You can increase the humidity in your home by using a humidifier on your furnace or by using a room humidifier.

Nasal Saline Sprays

Common commercial preparations such as Rhinaris, Salinex or Hydrasense help to keep your nasal passages moist. Use any one of these products three or more times per day. Use the saline spray before using any medicated nasal sprays.

Sinus Saline Rinse

Common commercial preparations include NeilMed Sinus Rinse, Neil Med NetiPot or Rhinaris Sinus Nasal Rinse. These help to remove mucus and decrease crusting, as well as wash away germs and chemicals released by your body in your nose to fight germs. These chemicals can cause irritation and congestion. These rinses should be used at least once daily to improve symptoms. Tilt your head forward over the sink. Irrigate each nostril with about half a cup of solution. The solution will go in one nostril and out the other. . Use the saline rinse before using any medicated nasal sprays.

This material is designed for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have specific questions, please consult your doctor or appropriate healthcare professional.

References

1. Harvey R, Hannan SA, Badia L, Scadding G. Nasal saline irrigations for the symptoms of chronic rhinosinusitis. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2007, Issue 3. Art. No.: CD006394. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD006394.pub22. Desrosiers et al.: Canadian clinical practice guidelines for acute and chronic rhinosinusitis. Allergy, Asthma & Clinical Immunology 2011 7:2. doi:10.1186/1710-1492-7-2