



## Saline Nasal Rinses

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### Background

Saline (saltwater) nasal rinses are an excellent and safe treatment for your nose and sinuses. The nose collects dust and pollens when you breathe in. For people with a tendency to allergic rhinitis (hay fever) or sinusitis, this dust and pollen may cause the lining of the nose to swell resulting in a blocked nose and/or sinuses. The nose then tries to clear the dust and pollen by producing excess mucus to 'flush out' the dust and pollen, causing mucus to run out the front of the nose or drip down the back of the throat.

There is good scientific evidence that saline rinses improve rhinitis and sinusitis symptoms with improved quality of life for patients. They are a safe and 'natural' treatment and have the same action on the nose as going for a swim in the sea.

### How to use saline rinses

You should rinse your nose at least once daily. You may need to rinse multiple times a day if your symptoms are worse, you are in a dusty environment or you have recently had surgery on your nose/sinuses. Given that it is a natural and safe treatment, you cannot 'overdose' by rinsing too often.

1. With your head downward over a sink (or in the shower), turn your head to one side
2. Squeeze the saline rinse gently into the top nostril
3. Breathe normally through your mouth
4. The solution should come out through your other nostril
5. Repeat the process on the other side

There are excellent short instructional videos on YouTube, search for 'NeilMed Sinus Rinse Video'.

### Where to get salt sachets and DIY recipe

- The sachets contain salt and baking soda and so you do not need a prescription to get refills. Sachets can be purchased over-the-counter from pharmacies or on-line (often cheaper).
- You make your own rinse solution by dissolving 1/2 teaspoon of non-iodised salt and 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda in 250ml of warm water

*Contd. overleaf*



## Practical tips

- If you are also using a nasal spray, use the saline rinse first to avoid washing the spray out of your nose
- If you cannot tolerate full rinses try using a saline spray instead (not as effective, but better than nothing)
- Manufacturers recommend you replace the bottle or pot every three months
- Try adjusting your head position to prevent the rinse going into your ears or down the back of your throat
- Using rinse volumes over 200ml is more effective.