

University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine Nasal Irrigation Instructions

How to make 1 pint of salt solution and How to use a nasal irrigation pot

1. You will need:

- salt (kosher, canning, or pickling salt)
- baking soda
- nasal irrigation pot
- measuring spoon (1 teaspoon, 1/2 tsp)
- pint container

2. Mix the solution:

- Measure 1 tsp of salt and 1/2 tsp of baking soda into the pint container.
- Add one pint of lukewarm tap water
- Stir
- From one-pint container of solution, fill nasal pot

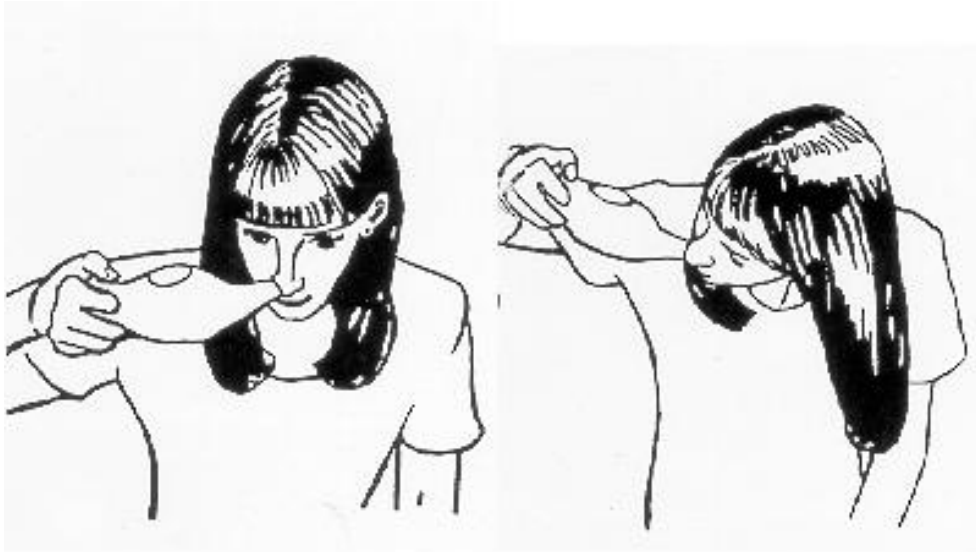
3. Position your head:

- 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)

4. Irrigate 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.

HANDOUT



5. Repeat the procedure for the other nostril:

- Refill the nasal pot from the 1 pt solution container.
- Repeat Steps 3 and 4 with the other nostril tilting your head to the other side.
- The solution may be kept at room temperature for 2 days.
- Wash nasal pot daily.

6. Troubleshooting

- If stinging or burning occurs, use a 1/2 tsp salt instead of 1 tsp to one pint water and decrease frequency to every other day. You may also try adjusting the temperature of the water slightly. Do not use very hot or very cold water.

A word about water quality. In the United States, lukewarm tap water from municipal water systems or intact wells deeper than 40 feet is considered safe for saline solution preparation. If these criteria are not met or if water safety is in doubt, distilled water or tap water boiled and then cooled to room temperature is recommended for saline solution preparation. Surface water should not be used for nasal irrigation.

Links to a PDF of this patient handout, a short instructional film and a radio story by National Public Radio (NPR) are at:

<http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/past-projects/nasal-irrigation>

Nasal Irrigation pots can be purchased from:

- University of Wisconsin Pharmacies
- Community Pharmacy, Madison, WI (608)251-3242
- Walgreen's Pharmacies Nationwide
- Many local pharmacies and health-oriented food cooperatives

HANDOUT

University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine
www.fammed.wisc.edu/research