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## NASAL SALINE IRRIGATION

Recipe for hypertonic saline (saltwater) for home or office irrigation:

1 liter (quart) of warm water (distilled is preferred).

2-3 heaping teaspoons of salt (Not table salt - this contains too many additives. Use canning, pickling, or sea salt).

1 teaspoon baking soda

Nose should be irrigated 2-3 times per day with bulb syringe, large medical syringe or a water pik with irrigator tip. Stand over the sink and squirt the saltwater mixture into the nose in such a fashion that you are able to spit some of the saline out of your mouth. This suggests that you are doing an adequate job of irrigating the entire nose. Aim the stream of saline as though you are to squirt the back of your head, NOT the top of your head. It is ok to breathe the saline directly into your nose.

Another method is to pour the salt water mixture into the palm of your hand. "Sniff" the solution into your nose until you can feel this running down the back of your throat. This solution can also be used as a gargle.

Warm water is preferred as it is much more comfortable. The amount of salt added will depend on your tolerance. However, the more salt that is added the greater the decongestant effect. The bicarbonate (baking soda) is a buffer and will allow the saline to be less irritating.

The benefits of hypertonic saline irrigation are three-fold:

1. It is a solvent. It cleans mucous, crusts, and other debris from the nasal passage.
2. It decongests the nose by shrinking the membrane which improves nasal air flow and opens sinus passages.
3. It improves nasal drainage. Studies have shown the saline cleansing of the nasal membranes improves ciliary motion so that normal mucous is transported more effectively from the sinuses through the nose and into the throat.

If you are using a nasal steroid like Flonase, Nasonex, or Nasocort, you should always irrigate first with the saline. The nasal steroid is most effective when sprayed onto clean nasal membranes and it reaches deeper into the nasal passage after cleaning and decongestion.