

# Saline Nasal Washes for Children: Care Instructions

## Overview

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Your doctor may suggest that you use salt water (saline) to wash mucus from your child's nose and sinuses. This simple remedy can help relieve symptoms of allergies, sinusitis, and colds. Most children notice a little burning sensation in the nose the first few times the solution is used, but this usually gets better in a few days.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

## How can you care for your child at home?

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- You can buy premixed saline solution in a squeeze bottle at a drugstore. Read and follow the instructions on the label.
- You can make your own saline solution at home by adding 1 teaspoon of non-iodized salt and 1 teaspoon of baking soda to 2 cups of distilled or boiled and cooled water.
- If you use a homemade solution, use a squeeze bottle or neti pot to get the solution into your child's nose. It may be more comfortable for your child if you use room-temperature or slightly warmed water. Make sure it isn't hot.
- Have your child gently lean over the sink or bathtub with their head tilted forward and slightly to one side. Put only the tip of the bulb syringe or squeeze bottle into the nostril that is farther away from the sink. (The nostril closer to the sink will drain the fluid.) Gently squirt the solution into the nose toward the back of their head, making sure your child's mouth is open. The solution should flow out of the other nostril. Repeat on the other side. It's normal for your child to sneeze or gag when doing a nasal wash.
- Have your child blow their nose. If your child is too young to blow, gently suction the nostrils with a bulb syringe.
- Clean the syringe or bottle after each use.
- Repeat this 2 or 3 times a day.
- Use nasal washes gently in children who have frequent nosebleeds.

## When should you call for help?

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Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if your child has any problems.

## Where can you learn more?

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Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/PatientEd>

Enter **J792** in the search box to learn more about "**Saline Nasal Washes for Children: Care Instructions**".

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