

# Rinsing your nasal passage (nasal douching)

Ear, Nose & Throat

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

After nasal surgery it is usual for your nose to feel blocked for the first 2 to 3 weeks, until the lining has settled down. Your nose may also run for the first few days and there may be blood stained mucus, which is normal. If you have a feeling of pain or pressure around the nose and forehead, you may find painkillers helpful.

To keep your sinuses clean and healthy it would be helpful to rinse (douche) your nose. To begin with try to do this at least 3 times a day for the first 2 weeks. After this it can be reduced as the nose begins to feel clearer.

Douching can be performed in the morning and/ or evening, or more frequently if severe infection is active, and advised by a clinician.

A solution can be mixed-up at home or you can buy a solution from the pharmacy. A salt water solution (balanced isotonic solution) can be made cheaply using home ingredients. It does not need any special equipment.

Wash your hands before performing the procedure. The fluid is sniffed into the nose from a mug or cupped hands.

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## Making your own solution

- Boil 240mls of water and allow it to cool
- 1/4 teaspoon of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda



Use clean equipment. You will need a spoon and mug in which to mix the ingredients together.

Check there are no crystals left in the mug from your previous rinse.



Measure out the dry ingredients.

1/4 teaspoon of salt

1/4 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda



Mix the boiled water that has cooled down with the dry ingredients.

## Rinse (douche) your nose



Lean over a sink and bring the mug of solution to your nose. Sniff a small amount of the fluid into your nose for about 2 to 3 seconds.

Alternatively, ask someone to pour the solution into your cupped hands, and sniff the fluid into your nose from your hands.



Take your nose away from the mug.

Allow the liquid to run back out of your nose and into the sink.



To rinse both sides of your nose, you may need to block each nostril in turn, as you sniff.



Repeat this action several times as you are able to, ideally until all the solution has been used.

After rinsing, blow your nose and let it rest for 10 to 20 minutes before applying any treatment spray.

## Other options for equipment which you can use

- A 20ml syringe (without needle) may be used to squirt the solution into your nose rather than sniffing it up.
- You can use a small jug or teapot to pour the solution into one nostril, allowing the fluid to run out through the other nostril. Keep your mouth open so you can continue to breathe whilst doing this.
- Use a squeeze bottle to make a high-volume, low-pressure device. Squirt the solution into one nostril and allow it to run out of the other nostril. Keep your mouth open so you can continue to breathe whilst doing this. This method has been found to be very effective.
- Use a douching spray which has a ready mixed solution in a canister which is already made up. This is handy to use and easy to apply, as part of your daily life.

## Further information and support

British Society for Allergy & Clinical Immunology (BSACI)

BSACI SOP nasal douching: <https://www.bsaci.org>

Images courtesy of Janette Bartle, East Suffolk North Essex Foundation Trust (ESNEFT) Ipswich Hospital.

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