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## **BUFFERED HYPERTONIC (3%) SALINE NASAL IRRIGATION**

### **The Benefits**

When you irrigate, the hypertonic saline (salt water) acts as a solvent and washes the mucous crusts and other debris from your nose.

1. The higher salt concentration pulls fluid out of the swollen membranes and shrinks them. This decongests and improves the airflow into your nose. The sinus passages begin to open.
2. Studies have also shown that high concentration salt water and an alkaline additive (baking soda) improves nasal membrane cell function (mucociliary flow of mucous).
3. Use 2-3 times a day when cold, flu or sinusitis for 1-2 weeks. If on antibiotics for sinusitis, use while on antibiotics and for 1 week after complete antibiotics. The 3% saline is **not** for ongoing use, but 1% (1 tsp salt in same formula) may be used when nose is dry.

**Choose** a one-quart *covered* glass jar that is thoroughly cleansed.

Fill with tap water. You do not need to boil water. You may use bottled water.

**Add** 2-3 heaping teaspoons (yields 2-3% solution) of pickling/canning salt, or sea salt, **NOT** table salt, as it contains a large number of additives.

**Add** 1 teaspoon Arm & Hammer Baking Soda (pure bicarbonate).

**Mix** ingredients together and store at room temperature. **Discard after one week.** If you find this solution too strong, you may *decrease the amount of salt added* to 1-1 ½ teaspoons. With children it is often best to start with a milder solution and advance slowly.

### **The Instructions**

You should plan to irrigate your nose with buffered hypertonic saline **2-3 times per day**.

You may use a **bulb/ear syringe**, large medical syringe (30 cc) or water pick (at the lowest setting) with irrigation tip. Always pour the amount of fluid you plan to use into a clean bowl.

**DO NOT** put your used syringe back into the quart because it contaminates your solution.

Many people prefer to warm the solution slightly in the microwave - But be sure that the solution is **NOT HOT**. Stand over the sink (some people do this in the shower) and squirt the solution into each side of your nose aiming the stream toward the back of your head, **NOT** the top of your head. This allows you to spit the salt water out of your mouth. It will not harm you if you swallow a little.

For younger children you may want to place the solution into a pump spray container such as Ayr Ocean spray or A nasal steroid container and squirt several times into each side of the nose. **DO NOT FORCE** your child to lie down. It is much easier to do in a seated or standing position.

If you have been told to use a nasal Steroid such as Flonase, Nasonex or Nasacort, you should always use the hypertonic saline solution **first** and then use your nasal steroid product. The nasal steroid is much more effective when sprayed onto clean nasal membranes and the medicated spray will reach deeper into the nose.

Most people experience a **slight burning sensation** the first few times they use the hypertonic saline solution, but this usually goes away in a few days. If you experience any weight gain, increased blood pressure, fluid retention, tight rings, etc. **Stop the saline wash and call the office to let us know.** Please call our office if you have any problems or questions.