

Sinus Irrigation

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

What is Sinus Irrigation?

Sinus irrigation is a salt water rinse. A device sends water through the nose and sinuses to wash away mucus and irritants in the sinus passages. This process is performed at home. It is recommended by ENT specialists to prevent sinus infections and help with nasal congestion and post-nasal drip.

How Does Sinus Irrigation Help?

- Moistens nasal passages and sinuses to combat nasal dryness and nosebleeds during the winter
- Washes away allergy triggers (i.e. pollen, dust)
- Loosens mucus and washes it out to improve:
 - Sinus pressure
 - Post-nasal drip, cough, and morning sore throat
 - Stuffy or runny nose

How to Perform a Sinus Irrigation?

The two most common sinus irrigation devices are:

- Neti Pot - a small teapot container with long spout
- NeilMed Sinus Rinse - a squirt bottle

Both are found at the Brown Pharmacy and most local pharmacies.

Follow the product's individual directions closely but here are some helpful and general tips:

- Check YouTube for step-by-step demonstrations to follow along.
- If taking a decongestant to treat symptoms, optimal timing of sinus irrigation is 20 minutes after taking a dose.
- Do **NOT** use tap water. Sterile, boiled, or bottled water only.
- Most irrigation kits come with the salt packets, but you may mix up your own using non-iodized Kosher or Sea Salt.
- You can irrigate up to 3 times per day but typically 1 to 2 times per day is sufficient.
- If doing the irrigation for allergies, even intermittent use can be beneficial.
- Clean device after EACH USE. Let it air dry or towel dry.
- Use fresh salt water for EACH USE.

Other ways to moisturize sinuses

- Salt water (saline) nasal sprays (i.e. Simply Saline)
- Steam from hot water (or tea)
- Vaporizer or humidifier when sleeping
- Frequent warm showers
- Salt water gargles
- Increased fluid intake, especially of hot fluids
- Hot, wet towel applications to your cheeks