

Sinus Cleansing

How to clean the sinuses, prevent and combat infections

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Sinus Cleansing, or nasal/sinus cleansing, using warm salty water, is a very ancient technique which has been passed on for thousands of years by the Yogis of Ayurvedic Medicine in India, now gaining credibility in the modern medicine. Nasal flushing is a simple technique for irrigating the nasal cavity with a salt water solution to cleanse out mucous, allergens and other debris. Though it can be done by simply sniffing a salt water solution up your nose out of the palm of your hand (while leaning over the sink), specific cups/neti pots are made to facilitate the process. With the ever increasing incidence of respiratory illnesses such as asthma, allergies, hay



fever, chronic sinusitis, colds, influenzas, etc, the practice of Sinus Cleansing is very beneficial to the cleanliness of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, lungs, as well as the thinking processes. It clears away the old debris built up in the sinus passages, taking away the environment that may support bacteria growth, in the blocked sinus cavities.

Benefits of Sinus Cleansing

Sinus Cleansing removes all the dirt and bacteria and virus filled mucus from within the nose. It also helps to drain the sinus cavities. This, in turn, will help to reprogram the body's natural mechanisms against nasal infections such as hay fever, allergies, sinusitis and other upper respiratory complaints like sore throats and coughs, post nasal drip, inflammation of tonsils and adenoids. It is beneficial for illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis as it reduces the tendency for mouth breathing by freeing the nostrils of mucus.

Sinus Cleansing can improve the sensitivity of the olfactory nerves, helping to restore lost sense of smell. I also suggest cutting back on our dairy products from your diet, drinking milk and consuming other dairy products can cause nasal blockages. By cleansing away trapped mucus, we also deny a potential breeding ground for viruses and other infectious disease.

Reasons for Sinus Cleansing

1. To remove excess mucous due to cold or congestion
2. To prevent colds or sinus infections by creating an unfavorable environment for bacterial and viral organisms
3. To cleanse the nostrils of irritating pollens or other allergens
4. To cleanse the nasal mucous membranes of dust, smoke or other airborne contaminants
5. To remedy nasal dryness, including dryness from flying
6. To enhance the breathing

Anatomy of the Sinus Cleansing Practice

For those who may not have much idea of the internal workings of the nasal cavities, it may seem like a silly thing to pour warm salty water through our nose. But when examined we find that the first line of nasal defense are the tiny hairs called "cilia" which should trap larger particles entering the nose. The sinuses are after all the filters of bacteria and viruses for the lungs. These cilia are usually cleansed by the act of normal breathing and by blowing the nose, but sometimes, due to a gradual build up of dirt they can become clogged and may require washing out. The whole of the nasal passages from nostrils to throat are covered with a layer of mucus. This mucus is secreted from within the mucus linings and its function is to trap smaller foreign particles



and bacteria. The dirty mucus is normally blown out, snorted and coughed out or swallowed, thereby killing off the trapped bacteria and viruses. The sinus passages are an even finer mechanism of filtering which, if infected, secrete a runny mucus to evict the germs. This is generally called sinusitis and can be a short term symptom or a chronic condition. Sinus Cleansing and nose cleansing activates the mucus membranes.

Professor Paul Stoksted states: "The movement of the cilia hairs can be paralyzed by virus and allergy provoking substances, and also when it dries out, the mucus becomes tough and crusty and loses its function. Cleansing with salt water keeps the mucus moist, the cilia hairs are stimulated and encrustations, dust as well as allergy provoking substances are removed."

How to prepare the Saline Solution

The keys to comfortable nasal cleaning are correct salt concentration ratio to water and water temperature. The solution should have the same salt concentration as your tears (0.9%) and be warmed to normal body temperature or a bit warmer. If the salt concentration is too low or too high, the experience can be very unpleasant (like getting water up your nose when you are swimming). Water that is too cool will cause the nasal membranes to swell which is uncomfortable, defeating the purpose of the wash. Water that is too hot will burn the sensitive nasal mucosa.

Ideally the water should be distilled water, though I use tap water (well water) if you know you have chlorinated water then use purified, bottled or distilled water. You will need a Sinus Cleansing pot, (a Neti Pot) or a squeeze bottle (empty coke bottle) or a cup can also be used. (A Sinus Cleansing/Neti pot is a small ceramic vessel, shaped like an Aladdin's lamp that is specifically designed for nasal cleansing, while convenient to use it is not necessary.)

Mix the following together:

- 1 scant teaspoon salt
- 16 ounces (500 ml) warm water

How to do Nose Cleansing - Sinus Cleansing

Do Sinus Cleansing over a sink. Hold the pot in one hand and place the spout against one nostril, so that it fits tightly. Lean forward, breathe relaxed through the mouth and turn the head to one side. Now the water will flow by itself, in through one nostril and out of the other. When half of the water has run through one nostril, gently blow out any remaining water and mucus. Then repeat this process in the other nostril.

In the end the nose should be dried. You bend forward and let your head hang loosely down, so that the remaining water can run out of the nose. Close one nostril with the index finger and turn the head alternating from side to side. Blow gently (not forcefully) through one nostril at a time - until the nose is dry. This exercise to dry the nose is an important part of nose cleansing, and should be done thoroughly every time.

Once learned, the practice can be done in about 3 minutes, and is easily integrated into a daily routine of body cleansing such as showering or cleaning of the teeth.

Difficulties:

Don't expect that this feels natural the first few times you do it. Stick with it at least once a week, twice daily until your nasal passages have cleared of some mucous as well as giving you time to learn how to do this. Many people have chronic mucus blockages due to allergy, diet or many other causes, and it can take time to clear it. If after a week you are still experiencing difficulties you have a nasal obstruction and might need to have an examination by a medical professional to ascertain the cause of your difficulty.



Use anti-viral herbs to wash out the sinuses to protect against flu or common cold viruses.

Mixed into the wash for the flu season, I suggest Isatis leaf and root Lonicera and Forsythia flowers these concentrated granules mix and dissolve into lukewarm water.

For every person with a cold, there are two or three who have sub-clinical infections - that is, **they have the virus is in the back of their noses** but they do not develop symptoms, and may never do so. The body's normal immune response keeps them in check. During the summer, this works well and relatively few people who harbor cold viruses develop full-blown colds. In winter, however, the cold weather outdoors causes the blood vessels in the lining of the nose to constrict, a reflex mechanism to save heat. This reduces the blood supply to the nasal lining where viruses can gain a foothold and become established. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) also holds this same belief. "The effect of the cold is that it reduces the flow of white blood cells, the body's immune response, cutting off the troops to fight the infection. The cold also slows the flow of mucus in the nose which is needed to trap the virus so you swallow it and destroy it in the stomach," says Professor Eccles.¹

Use an herbal anti-viral, nasal rinse (some use a neti-pot) with salt (non-iodized) or add some anti-viral herbs, would help rinse away a viral threat.

1. WRAPPING UP WARM CAN STOP YOU FROM CATCHING A COLD Published: 15 November 2005
http://news.independent.co.uk/uk/health_medical/article327227.ece

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