

Nasal Hygiene

General Information: Maintaining a moist environment in the nasal cavity can help improve nasal congestion and drainage from the nose.

Nasal Sprays:

Perform nasal hygiene every morning and every night in the following order:

(1) Saline Spray or Rinse

- Twice-daily plus additional cleansing as-needed throughout the day
- Purpose is to clean the nose of mucus and thin out the secretions
- Type of saline spray/rinse will depend on discussion with your doctor and severity of symptoms
- Mild nasal congestion: Use an over-the-counter Saline Nasal Spray – few puffs to each side followed by nose-blowing to clear secretions and mucus from the nasal cavity
- More severe nasal congestion: Use Saline Rinse Kit (starter kit provided by ENT Clinic) – 1/2 bottle to each side followed by nose-blowing to clear secretions and mucus from the nasal cavity

(2) Steroid Nasal Spray

- Usually once-daily (unless instructed otherwise) AFTER saline spray/rinse (above)
- Purpose is to reduce inflammation of nasal mucus membranes
- Aim the medication STRAIGHT BACK into the nose (NOT straight up the nose)
- Imagine trying to aim for behind and below the eyeball on that side of the face
- Gently sniff with each spray to deliver it into the nose (try not to sniff too hard or it will bypass the nose and enter the lungs)

During Upper Respiratory Tract Infections or Colds:

- (1) Add over-the-counter topical nasal decongestant spray (Afrin, Oxymetazoline, Neosynephrine) – use this first (before saline spray/rinse) as a decongesting spray to help open up your nasal and sinus passages to allow saline and steroid nasal spray to work. It is important to use these decongestant sprays for ONLY 3 DAYS AND THEN STOP FOR 4 DAYS; if symptoms persist, may resume use for another 3 days, then stop.

Contact Information: The Otolaryngology nurse can be reached at (603) 650-4399 and can answer any additional concerns or questions you may have. My secretary can be reached at (603) 650-8123. The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center operator is available 24 hours-a-day and can be reached at (603) 650-5000.

In addition, the following web page has helpful information regarding common pediatric ear, nose, and throat concerns: <http://www.entnet.org/kidsent>