

# NASAL IRRIGATIONS

Saltwater washes (saline lavage or irrigation) help keep the nasal passages open by washing out thick or dried mucus. They can also help improve the function of the cilia (tiny hairs in the back of the nose) that help clear the sinuses. This can help prevent discomfort by keeping the mucous membranes moist.

## **PURCHASE SALINE AT A PHARMACY, OR MAKE YOUR OWN BY FOLLOWING THESE STEPS:**

- Add 1 cup (237 mL) distilled water to a clean container. If you use tap water, boil it first to sterilize it, then let it cool until it is lukewarm.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 g) of pickling or canning salt to the water.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon (2.5 g) of baking soda. You can store homemade saline solution at room temperature for up to 3 days.

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## **USING HOMEMADE SALINE SOLUTION AS A NASAL WASH:**

- Fill a large medical syringe, squeeze bottle, or nasal cleansing pot (such as a Neti pot) with saline solution, insert the tip into your nostril, and squeeze gently.
- Aim the stream of saline solution toward the back of your head, not toward the top.
- The saline wash should go through the nose and out the mouth or the other nostril.
- Blow your nose gently after the saline wash, unless your doctor told you not to blow your nose.
- Repeat several times every day.
- Clean the syringe or bottle after each use.

## **REMEMBER:**

- Do the saline wash before you use your other nasal medicines. The wash will help your sinuses absorb the medicine.
- You can warm up the saline solution, but make sure it's not hot.
- The saline wash may cause a burning feeling in your nose the first few times you use it. Most people get used to it after a few times.