

**Patient  
Information**

# Nasal douching

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about nasal douching, when to use it and how to make up a saline solution.

## What is a nasal douche?

A nasal douche is a simple procedure used to flush out the nasal passages with a saline solution (salt water). Douching is commonly used to remove crusts and debris from the nose, to keep it clean and healthy.

## Reasons for using a nasal douche

### After nasal surgery

The inside of the nose can often be left raw and sore after surgery. The mucus produced by the nose can become dry and form a crust. This crust can cause infection to develop and a delay in the healing process. Using a nasal douche may help to prevent any dry crusts (scabs) from forming.

The douche should be started 3 to 4 days after surgery and carried out each morning and night for 2 weeks or more (your hospital doctor will tell you how long they want you to use it for).

The nose is often very blocked in the first week after an operation, especially if plastic internal splints are still present. The douche becomes much easier to use after the splints are removed.

### After bleeding from the nose

Crusts can form following a nose bleed. Nasal douching can keep the crusts soft and wash them away to prevent further bleeding.

### Nasal allergy/inflammation of sinuses (sinusitis)

Washing away excess mucus along with any allergens or irritants helps reduce the amount of inflammation in the nasal passages and relieve symptoms.

Reference No.

**GHP11779\_06\_23**

Department

**ENT**

Review due

**June 2026**

**Patient  
Information**

## Other medications for the nasal passage

If you have been prescribed nasal drops or sprays, **you should douche the nose before these medications are applied**. If the douche is applied after, the medication will be washed out and will not work.

## How to make up a saline nasal douche

You will need:

- A clean container, such as a jug, to mix the saline solution in or a pre-made saline solution
- A nasal irrigation device, ideally a squeezable bottle
- Clean distilled or boiled water (cooled to room temperature)
- Saline solution; mix together the ingredients listed below, in the clean container
  - 1 teaspoon of non-iodized salt
  - ½ teaspoon of baking soda
  - 500ml of freshly boiled water

Leave the solution to cool until it feels slightly warm to touch. Use the irrigation device (squeezable bottle) to administer the douche.

You can buy a squeezable bottle from your local high street pharmacy or online retailers, see examples below:



## Patient Information

### Instructions for using the nasal douche

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Mix the saline solution in the container or use a pre-made solution.
- Fill the nasal irrigation device with the solution.
- Stand over a sink or in the shower.
- Tilt your head to one side so that one nostril is higher than the other.
- Insert the tip of the nasal irrigation device into the upper nostril.
- Squeeze the device gently to allow the saline solution to flow into the upper nostril and out of the lower nostril or mouth.
- Repeat on the other side.
- Blow your nose **gently** to remove any remaining saline solution and mucus.

Use the douche twice every day, morning and night, until your nose is clear or according to your doctor's advice.

### Further information

Please visit the following website for further information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your care.

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If you have any questions about nasal douching, please contact the ENT Department using the number provided on your appointment letter.

Content reviewed: June 2023

## Making a choice

### Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



### Ask 3 Questions

**To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.**

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation

\* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>