Sinus Irrigation: A Wet Nose is a Healthy Nose

- Mucous in our noses and sinuses can be very thick and adherent, especially in the winter when indoor heating dries out the air.
- Nasal dryness also contributing to nosebleeds in the winter.
- Nasal and sinus congestion arising from viral upper respiratory colds, and allergies can lead to unpleasant symptoms of sinus pressure, post nasal drip, cough, morning sore throat and blocked ears.
- Getting moisture to the sinuses to help loosen and wash out the mucous is essential.
- **Sinus irrigation** is practice where salt water is gently guided into the nose to wash out mucous congestion in the sinuses. It is recommended by ENT specialists as a great way to prevent sinus infections, treat sinus congestion, and may help prevent the need for antibiotics. By cleaning out the mucous, it doesn’t stagnate and bacteria may be prevented from setting in.
- While the concept may at first seem odd, it is a natural and healthy way to clean the mucous out of the nose and sinuses and the benefits are immediate for most users-less pressure in their sinuses, less postnasal drip.
- Sinus irrigation is accomplished by using devices such as the Neti Pot (a small pitcher into which salt water is placed) or other “squirt bottle” type irrigation systems (such as McNeil Sinus Rinse). Both are available at the Brown Pharmacy, and at most local pharmacies and Whole Foods.
- Package insert product directions are very helpful and clear. YouTube also has some demonstrations of the Neti pot (Himalayan Institute’s clip may be helpful).
- Optimal timing for sinus irrigation is 20 minutes after you have used a decongestant to allow the salt water to easily enter the nose.
- Tap water should not be used. Rather dis-tilled, previously boiled or sterile water is advised. Most irrigation kits come with the salt packets, but you may mix up your own using non-iodized Kosher or Sea Salt.
- It is important to clean the device after each use and use fresh saline solution.
• Initially try to irrigate once in the morning and once at night; after a while you will find out what works best for you. You may adjust frequency over time.
• Some people with allergies find great relief irrigating intermittently as well.

Other ways to moisturize sinuses

• Salt water sprays that gently mist the nose may be used many times a day. “Simply Saline” is one example which doesn’t have any preservatives, but many brands are available at pharmacies including the Brown Pharmacy.
• Try breathing steam over a pot of hot water.
• Consider purchasing a vaporizer or humidifier to increase the moisture in the air around you, especially as you sleep.
• Take frequent warm showers.
• Gargle with salt water in the morning and night to clean your throat.
• Increase your fluids, try to drink a lot of hot fluids such as tea.
• Apply hot wet towels to your cheeks to bring circulation over the sinuses.