



## **CARE OF THE NOSE AND SINUSES FOR THE CPAPUSER**

The use of nasal CPAP requires clear nasal passages. If you have nasal and sinus congestion due to allergies or a cold, your CPAP may be hard to tolerate, or it may not provide adequate pressure to keep your airway open. Avoid short-acting decongestant nasal sprays (such as Afrin, NeoSynephrine , or Vicks) because they can cause the swelling of nasal membranes to “rebound” within a couple of hours, and they don’t work as well if they are used frequently.

### **Here are some healthy solutions for nasal congestion:**

- **Antihistamine medications (oral or nasal) and oral decongestants** are fine to use, assuming you have certain medications that work for you, and your doctor has approved them for any medical problems you have.
- **Nasal Saline sprays:** For nasal congestion, sinus drainage, and even for daily moisturizing of inside of the nose, use a saline (salt water) solution. These are available at most stores that sell cold remedies, usually in the same general area as cold and allergy supplies. Most people find that a bottle of saline spray (which costs between \$2.50 and \$3.50) is helpful. These products produce a fine mist of saline when the bottle is squeezed. The nozzle of the bottle is inserted into the very front of the nostril (while the other nostril is pressed closed), and you inhale through the open nostril as you squeeze the saline bottle. You can use this as much as needed during the day and night. One spray will moisturize the nasal passages, and several sprays in a row will provide a “washing” effect, helping to clear congestion if you blow your nose immediately thereafter. This will also help to moisturize your upper nasal passages and the area of your sinuses. The more you use at once, the more likely you are you swallow some of the salt water, so if you have kidney problems or congestive heart failure you may wish to use this type of product less often, and check with your primary care doctor first.



More intensive forms of saline treatment are available. These products provide a safe, slightly pressurized stream of saline that can help to rinse the sinuses and the nasal passages. These are also available in the cold remedy section of stores, and include brand name (Entsol and Sinus Rinse, for example) and generic products. The pressurized stream of saline is more than some people wish to tolerate, and it is more important for people to check with their primary care doctors and/or Ear, Nose and Throat doctors to ensure that pressurized saline washes are appropriate for them.

- **Nasal Steroid Sprays:** These are prescription medications known as Flonase Beconase, Nasonex and Nasacort. They contain corticosteroids which have anti-inflammatory properties. They work on the inhibition of mast cells, histamine and other cells involved in the inflammation cascade. You will not notice an immediate symptom relief (works within 24-48 hours); these medications work best if used at the same time daily for an extended period of time. Therefore, if you have known annual allergies, start on this therapy early to prevent the symptoms.

You may use these medications in conjunction with the above described nasal sprays. Be sure to use the saline sprays first to “clean out” you nasal passages, use the nasal sprays following the cleansing. The use of these drugs will not cause habituation, weight gain, anxiety or muscle gain. You may obtain a prescription for these medications from your primary doctor or from the office.

- **CPAP Mask Options:** You will have the option from your insurance company to obtain additional supplies such as masks and tubing for your CPAP machine every 3-6 months. You may opt for adding a full face mask to your CPAP collection. Such a mask can help you breathe through your mouth during sleep if your nose happens to be congested. You can simply change the mask back to your norm when you feel better.

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