

How to use a nasal spray

Asthma and Allergy

Information for Patients

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What is a nasal spray?

Nasal sprays are medicines that you spray into your nose to reduce irritation or reaction that causes blocked nose, runny nose, sneezing, and itching

It is commonly used to treat:

- **Allergic rhinitis** (like hay fever, dust or pet allergies)
- **Nasal congestion** (blocked nose)
- **Runny or itchy nose**
- **Nasal polyps** (soft growths inside the nose)
- **Sinusitis** (inflammation of the sinuses)

Using the correct nasal spray technique will help the medication work more effectively. You will also reduce your risk of side effects like nose bleeds, irritation and soreness.

Nasal Spray Technique

Nasal sprays will vary in shape and size, but the technique remains the same. Please follow the instructions below.

Before first use, you will need to prime the nasal spray. You do this by holding the spray away from face and spray 2 to 5 times. Do this until a mist appears when you spray. You do this if you have not used it before, or if you have not used it for 2 weeks. Please make sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- **Step 1:** Clean the nose by gently blowing or by rinsing your nose with salt-water (nasal douching). This removes mucus that would stop the medicated spray from reaching the nasal lining.

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- **Step 2:** Tilt your head forward, placing your chin on your chest. This position closes off the back of the throat. It lets the spray reach the correct area inside the nose.
- **Step 3:** Hold the spray in the opposite hand to the nostril you are about to spray. For example, use the left hand to apply the spray in the right nostril. Use the right hand for the left nostril. This makes sure you aim the spray at the correct angle, pointing it away from the septum which has only a thin layer of membrane and can be easily damaged.
- **Step 4:** Place the end of the spray bottle just inside the nostril aiming away from the septum pointing to the ear or eye. This will make sure the spray is aimed toward the fleshy part of the nose which is often the main area of swelling in the nose.
- **Step 5:** Activate the spray. You may breathe in gently and steadily through your nose. **Do not sniff.** Sniffing can make you swallow or taste the medicine.
- **Step 6:** Breathe out through your mouth. Put the bottle into the opposite hand and repeat steps 4, 5 and 6 in the other nostril.

More information and useful links

Do not use other nasal preparations unless advised to do so by your doctor.

Manufacturers guidance may differ between types of sprays.

- **BSACI:** www.bsaci.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/How-to-use-a-Nasal-spray-PIL.pdf
- **Asthma and lung:** www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/nasal-spray
- **NHS:** www.nhs.uk/conditions/steroid-nasal-sprays

Contact details:

Contact your GP / Practice team for more advice and support or call NHS 111.

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