

Spring Cleaning with a Neti Pot

by Irina Samurin

April is a time of allergies. Sneezing, sniffing and clogged sinuses are some of the symptoms. However,

using a tool from the East can clean nasal pathways, reduce the effects of colds and allergies, and create greater comfort and health.

Nasal irrigation with a neti pot is a personal-hygiene practice, with which excessive mucus and debris are washed out from nasal cavities.

This procedure has been practiced in India for several centuries, and has been shown to be safe and beneficial for health.

People with chronic inflammation of sinus of Highmore, for example, often notice nasal irrigation provides effective relief from characteristic headaches, bad breath, coughing, snoring, runny nose and nasal congestion.

When using a neti pot, a saline, or salt, solution is poured into one nostril, with the head tilted, and the solution then flows out of the other nostril.

Nasal irrigation using saline solution moisturizes the nasal mucosa and washes out encrusted mucus and debris. When prepared in right proportions, the solution has a slightly acidic pH and an antibacterial effect. The flow of the solution through the nasal cavities ensures washing out of debris, airborne allergens (dust and pollen), chemical compounds, pollutants and bacteria-filled mucus.

If preferred, you can use a personally prepared saline solution for the procedure. The amount of salt dissolved

in the water is such that the solution matches the chemical composition of the cells of the human body.

Using your neti pot

1. Measure 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon baking soda into a neti pot.

2. Fill the pot with room-temperature water.

3. Stir until the ingredients are dissolved in the water.

4. Bend over a sink and turn your head 45 degrees, so that your left nostril is lower than your right nostril. This can be performed in the shower instead of over a sink.

5. Gently insert the spout of the neti pot into your right nostril.

6. Pour the solution into your right nostril. (To prevent the solution from flowing down your larynx, open your mouth and say "K." This will block the nasal cavities from the larynx.)

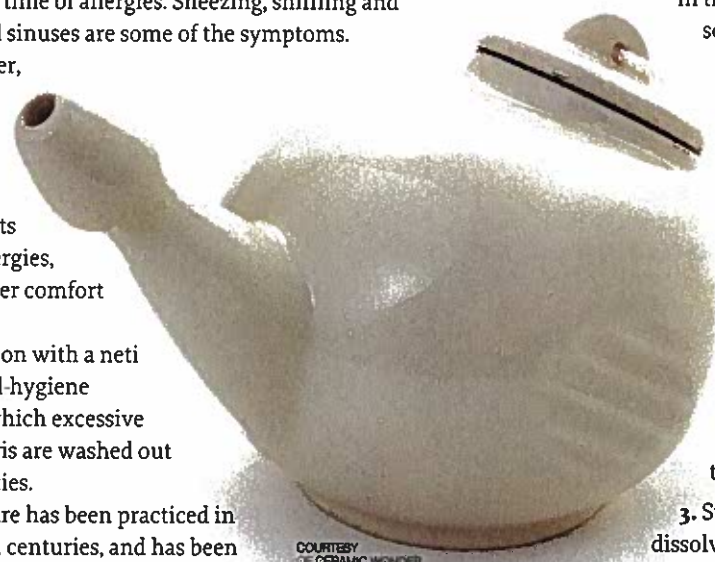
7. The solution will flow out of your left nostril and into the sink.

8. Gently blow your nose.

9. Repeat the same procedure with your other nostril.

Cautionary measures

- Do not use iodized salt.
- Do not use hot or cold water. (Cold water irritates the



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membranes of the nasal cells and can also induce the gag reflex, while hot water can irritate the mucus membrane.)

- Do not push the spout of the pot too deep into the nostril.
- Disinfect the pot before using it.
- If you have accidentally dropped the pot, make sure the surface of the spout is intact. To prevent bruising your nostrils, do not use a defective neti pot.
- If you feel any prickling or burning sensations in your

nasal mucosa, decrease the number of procedures; instead of daily preventive measures, use your neti pot every other day.

- In case of continued discomfort, see a physician.

Irina Samurin has been a professional esthetician for more than 20 years. She owned a spa in France and managed a spa-and-wellness center in Estonia. She is a mother of three, an educator in massage-tool techniques, and creator of Ceramic Wonder massage tools (www.ceramicwonder.com).

Rub On Pain Relief

Massage therapists are the athletes of health care, standing, bending and providing the effleurage, petrissage, tapotement and other strokes and movements needed to effect the benefits of healthy touch. And just like athletes, massage professionals are prone to injury. One way to effect pain relief is by utilizing one of the many analgesics on the market today.

"A massage therapist can develop similar injuries to a professional musician or a competitive athlete, as each primarily relies on a repetitive motion," says Jeff Baskett, marketing program manager for Sombra Professional Therapy Products, maker of Warm Therapy and Cool Therapy pain relieving gels.

"Normally, these injuries are soft tissue in nature—and if left untreated, will become chronic and may lead to osteoarthritis," he adds. "With all the body manipulation a therapist does, these injuries often occur in the hands and fingers and can be quite debilitating for a practicing massage therapist."

Topical analgesics are effective for reducing many types of aches and pains, "and are certainly much safer than consumption of aspirin or acetaminophen," says Lynda Solien-Wolfe, director of education and research—massage and spa for Performance Health, which manufactures Biofreeze cooling analgesic and Proassage warming analgesic.

"As a superficial heat, a warm-therapy analgesic is a simple and convenient modality to use for self-treatment," says Baskett. "It will promote circulation and blood flow in the injured area and will assist with tissue extensibility and reduce muscle spasms." Warming the injured area will also promote healing because of the increase in oxygen and nutrients, he adds.

Pain relief is important, because discomfort from a

lingering injury can become distracting for the massage therapist, says Baskett.

"When a massage therapist can work pain-free, there is a great psychological advantage," Solien-Wolfe explains. "It is no fun to work when you are tired and sore."

She suggests massage therapists exercise muscles that need strengthening and stretch muscles that become tight.

"Using a topical analgesic before and after exercise will decrease discomfort," Solien-Wolfe adds. "A commitment to self-care and pain-free movement prolongs the career of a massage therapist."

—Karen Menehan

