



# Health Awareness

## Doctors, Research Say Drug-Free Nasal Wash Relieves Sinus Problems

(NAPSA)—A stuffy nose, sore throat, cough and headache are nothing to sneeze at. While many people write off these symptoms as the common cold, if they don't subside within seven to 10 days or if they reoccur, they could be signs of more serious conditions. Congestion and related sinus problems that persist over time can signal a variety of complicated illnesses, including allergic rhinitis and chronic sinusitis.

Thirty-seven million Americans—16.3 percent of adults—suffer from recurring sinus problems. Add in the number of people who get a cold or the flu and who combat allergies and the number is closer to 70 million.

Only a doctor can diagnose chronic illness and while prescription medications can help to alleviate symptoms, one of the most frustrating aspects for sinus sufferers is that there is no cure. No FDA-approved prescription or over-the-counter drug has been labeled to treat illnesses such as chronic sinusitis, according to *Sinus News*.

The key to relief, according to ear, nose and throat doctor Diane G. Heatley, is in managing sinus problems. "Chronic sinus problems won't go away on their own," said Dr. Heatley. "Like back pain or weight control, sinus problems must be managed over time."

A more effective treatment for sinus pain may not be in a bottle. According to a recent study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, nasal wash is an effective



**Research suggests rinsing out your nose regularly can help you fight sinus problems.**

treatment for sinus problems. The study is one of the many that have found that daily washing of the nose can minimize many sinus ailments.

"Sometimes the simplest treatments are the most effective in sinus cases," said Dr. Heatley. "I tell my patients to make washing their nose a regular part of their daily regimen—like brushing teeth. Most people don't think about it, but your nose traps dirt and germs. Unless these dirt particles are rinsed out, they can lead to thickened mucus—the root cause of sinusitis."

Nasal washes—sometimes called nasal irrigation—are based on an ancient device called the neti pot, used for centuries by yogis. Drug-stores like Walgreens have cre-

ated a new category for nasal washes, evidence of the growing acceptance of non-drug nasal treatments.

The UM-Madison study followed participants using the Sinu-Cleanse® nasal wash system for six months and found the nasal wash provided an effective treatment for sinus infections. In the study, participants who added the nasal wash to their daily regimen showed decreased symptoms, decreased medication use and their overall health improved over the period of the study.

Why do nasal washes work? It has to do with how the sinuses function.

The sinuses are lined with cells that produce mucus to keep the nasal passages moist and trap inhaled irritants. As long as the mucus remains thin and watery, it will flow easily along its course down the throat to be swallowed. If it becomes thick, however, it can pool in the sinuses or in the nose, providing fertile ground for infection with bacteria.

Over-the-counter nasal washes make proper sinus care easier than ever. Dr. Heatley designed SinuCleanse to treat patients at her ENT practice. The system, sold in Walgreens and other pharmacies, can be a complete, cost-effective solution to manage sinus problems.

Sinus sufferers interested in effective treatment can find recent research at <http://www.sinucleanse.com/doublestudy.htm>.