

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary

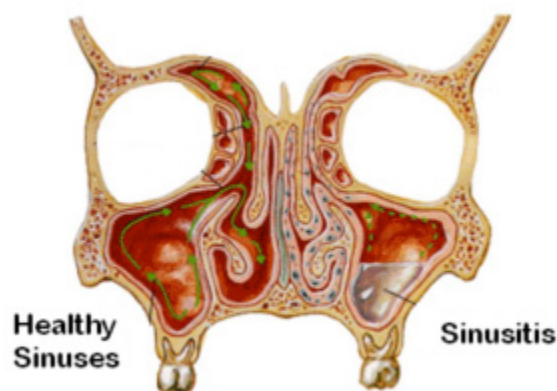
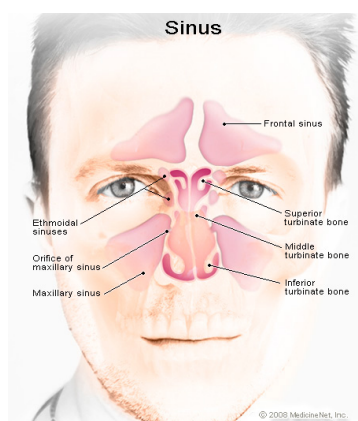
Title: Neti Pots & Your Sinuses

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Plain Language Summary:

What is a sinus infection?

Your sinuses are moist spaces filled with air that are inside your head under your nose, eyes, and cheeks. See the pictures below. Tiny holes connect these spaces with your nose so that they can drain.



If you have a cold, allergies, or are around smoke or dust, these spaces can swell and get filled with gunk. When this happens, it can make germs to grow. This is called a sinus infection or “sinusitis”. It can make your head hurt or feel full. It can also give you a cough, sore throat, runny nose, bad breath, or fever.

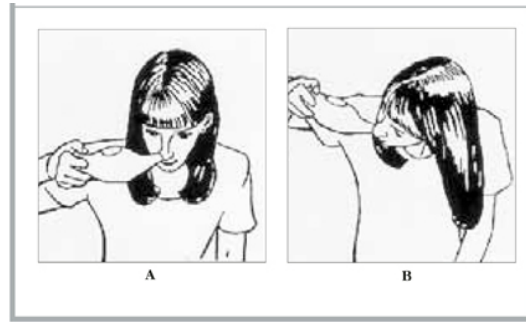
There are two kinds of sinusitis. It can be short-term (“acute”) or long-term (“chronic”) which is when symptoms last for more than 12 weeks.

What is a neti pot?

A neti pot looks like a mix between a tea kettle and Aladdin’s lamp. It is specially made to help people wash out their noses and sinuses. Salt water (called “saline”) is put inside the pot. It is poured right into one side of the nose and then it comes back out the other side. This helps clear out all the gunk trapped inside.



Neti Pot



How to use a Neti Pot

For people that get sinus problems often, doing this every day can help them feel better. They may feel better every day and also get less infections.

Do neti pots really work?

Studies show that daily neti pot use helps people with chronic sinusitis. It helps them get symptoms less often when compared with no treatment at all. It is even more helpful when combined with the usual treatments that doctors prescribe.

Are there any downsides?

Neti pots are quite safe. No serious or life-threatening side effects have been found. Some people do have mild side effects from neti pots though. A feeling of burning in the nose and nausea are the most common side effects. Most people feel that these mild side effects are well worth the benefit they get from their neti pots.

There are also times when stronger medicine is needed. If germs are causing your symptoms, then you have an infection. Neti pots can't kill germs so when this happens you need special medicine that you can only get from your doctor.

When should I see a doctor?

You should see your doctor if you have any of the following:

- Head pain that lasts more than 7 days after you try your home treatments.
- Green or yellow nasal discharge for more than 3 or 4 days.
- Fever more than 100.5 degrees.
- Eye pain or blurry vision.
- Puffy face.
- Confusion.

Additional Resources:

Sinus infections:

More on sinus infections:

<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/guide/allergies-sinusitis>

Other tips for sinus relief:

<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/sinus-pain-pressure-11/sinus-tips>

Neti Pots:

How to choose one:

<http://www.neti-netti-pot.com/neti-pots.html>

Where to buy one:

<http://www.neti-netti-pot.com/where-can-i-get-a-neti-pot.html>

Safe use:

<http://www.neti-netti-pot.com/neti-pot-dangers.html>

Video demos:

<http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/research/past-projects/nasal-irrigation#video>

<http://www.neti-netti-pot.com/neti-pot-how-to-video.html>

Recipe for sinus saline rinse:

<http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/treatments/saline-sinus-rinse-recipe.aspx>

Key Words:

Neti Pot

Nasal saline

Sinusitis

Sinus infection

Sinus

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Family Medicine Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.