



Ancient Practices can be Today's Benefit

Jala Neti, literally meaning *nasal cleansing* in Sanskrit, until recently, has been popular in India and other areas in South East Asia. *Jala Neti* (also called *neti* or *Jalaneti*) is an ancient technique of using a *neti pot* to irrigate or cleanse your sinuses. Western culture has recently become more accepting of the benefits of this ancient technique. Although nasal saline (salt) irrigation has been a part of post-operative care for sinus surgery patients, it has normally involved the use of a syringe or bulb syringe and has not been strongly encouraged as preventative measures for those who are prone to sinusitis and allergic rhinitis. Recent studies have shown that nasal saline irrigation as part of your daily morning routine can facilitate sinus health and overall wellness.

In order to understand how *neti pots* work you must first understand what sinuses are and how they work. Sinuses are air filled cavities within certain bones of your face, adjacent to the nasal cavity, which are lined with moisture-producing mucous membranes. These membranes contain cilia which are small, hair-like structures that beat or pulsate in unison to propel mucus. The mucus rids your sinuses and nasal passages of bacteria, pollens and other pollutants. The mucus that is secreted is often unnoticed and drains down into your nasal passages and back down your nasopharynx (area of the upper throat that lies behind the nose). The mucus, many believe, also contains antibodies to help fight infection. Healthy sinuses are usually sterile and contain no infectious bacteria.

Your sinuses began to develop during the second and fourth month of gestation. Soon after birth the ethmoid and maxillary sinuses were present. The frontal and sphenoid sinuses developed later in your childhood. Under normal circumstances, by the time you have reached puberty you will have developed four pairs of sinuses, consisting of right and left of each: frontal, ethmoid, sphenoid and maxillary. Your frontal sinuses are located behind your forehead, while the ethmoid sinuses are between your eyes and the sphenoid sinuses following behind them. The maxillary sinuses are also referred to as cheek sinuses as they are behind your cheekbones.

The propulsion of mucus and pollutants is a somewhat delicate system which may become interrupted for many reasons. Inflammation of your mucous membranes within your sinuses can cause acute sinusitis. Acute sinusitis results in obstruction of the flow of secretions or mucus. This may or may not cause you to become infected. When your sinuses become inflamed or subsequently infected you may experience the following symptoms: headache, nasal swelling and/or congestion, facial pressure, pain, or tenderness to palpation, a low grade fever, and/or purulent or bloody nasal drainage. Causative agents include, but are not limited to, *Streptococcus Pneumoniae*, *Haemophilus Influenza*, *Diplococcus*, *Staphylococcus Aureus* and/or *Bacteroides*. Acute sinusitis may follow or accompany acute or chronic allergic rhinitis.

Chronic sinusitis is suspected when your mucous membranes become permanently thickened from prolonged or repeated inflammation or infection. The symptoms are persistent and confirmed through a CT scan (Computed Tomography). Sinusitis most often develops in the maxillary and frontal sinuses and may require endoscopic sinus surgery.

Your nasal passages are your first line of defense trapping large particles and pollutants in the small hairs and mucus in your nostrils. Through proper care of your nasal passages or nostrils, you can help prevent sinusitis.

The ancient technique of irrigating your nose was based on the belief of health promotion and disease prevention versus just the treatment of current disease. Today's research shows that daily irrigation is not only beneficial to post-operative sinus patients but as prevention of sinusitis and allergy symptoms as well. Nasal saline irrigation can reportedly: prevent mucus build up that may cause nasal obstruction and congestion; rid your sinuses of allergens, irritants, and contaminants; improve mucus transport; assist in removing dried mucus and crusting; relieve nasal dryness; relieve your allergy and sinus symptoms; and promote healthy nasal passages. This is where the *neti pot* comes in.

Most *neti pots* are shaped like Aladdin lamps or small teapots, which facilitates appropriate and convenient use. *Neti pots* vary in composite materials and prices. Prices range from \$12.00 to \$24.00 and up and are available through various companies. They may be made out of materials such as: ceramic, glass, copper, stainless steel, and plastic. How exactly do you perform *Jala Neti* with the use of a *neti pot*? The appropriate use of your *neti pot* includes simple steps:

1. Before using your *neti pot* fill it with a **warm** saline (salt water) solution, which can be purchased or you can mix your own.

Recipe for Nasal Saline Irrigation:

Makes 1 gallon:

1 gallon clean water

8 teaspoons baking soda

8 teaspoons salt

(preferably a quality sea salt, non-iodized table salt, or Kosher salt)

Mix ingredients together until well mixed. If stored in a clean, air tight container, the mixture should be acceptable to use for up to 1 week. Warning: do not use hot water as this may cause burns and do not re-use the saline mixture after each nasal irrigation as this may cause contamination.

Makes 1 pint

1 pint clean water

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

2. Standing over the sink or in the shower, tilt your head to the right, insert the spout of your *neti pot* into the left nostril making sure you have a good seal and begin to gently pour out half of the saline solution. You will notice the solution flow in through the left nostril and out through the right nostril. Make sure to breathe out of your mouth and not your nose.
3. Before switching sides, remove the *neti pot* and gently blow through both nostrils to clear the solution and mucus from the left nostril.
4. Now tilt your head to the left. Insert the spout of the *neti pot* into the right nostril. Gently pour the remaining solution. After removing the *neti pot* gently blow through both nostrils.
5. If you feel obstructed or congested, you may repeat the steps. For maximum results it is best to perform *Jala Neti* once in the morning and once in the evening.

Reported problems with nasal saline irrigation include, but are not limited to, burning or irritation to the nasal lining, which may be due to incorrect water temperature or the salinity of the water used, and the retention of saline in the nasal passages or sinuses. If the water does not drain immediately, try tilting your head differently. Otherwise, the use of *neti pots* for nasal saline irrigation is economical, safe, and has very little, if any, side effects as compared to antihistamines, decongestants, and antibiotics. The best part of all—you don't have to take a trip to India to cleanse your sinuses, you can perform *Jala Neti* in the convenience and privacy of your own home.

At Advanced ENT and Allergy Sinus Center we encourage you to become proactive rather than reactive. However, we do realize that illnesses arise in which we are sensitive to your reported symptoms and to your needs. Although we do not perform *Jala Neti* in our office nor do we sell *neti pots*, we **do** provide caring and individualized treatment of sinusitis and allergic rhinitis. Call to make an appointment at any of our eight locations see on the next page.

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<p>Jeffersonville Location 301 Gordon Gutmann Blvd., Suite 402 Jeffersonville, Indiana 47130 Phone: 812-206-1910 Fax: 502-213-3853</p>	<p>Poplar Level Location "New Location" 3515 Poplar Level Road Louisville, Kentucky 40217 Phone: 502-459-3760 Fax: 502-213-3853</p>	<p>LaGrange Location 1023 New Moody Lane Suite 202 LaGrange, Kentucky 40031 Phone: 502-222-4589 Fax: 502-213-3853</p>
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