

Nasal & Sinus Congestion – The “Supernose”

To understand why **1 or both sides** of your nose or sinuses feel **stuffy or blocked**, it is helpful to think of why you have a nose in the first place. The 2 most important **functions of your nose** are **to protect your lungs and to allow your sinuses, your ears and eyes to drain extra fluids**. So the nose is not only a dumping area for the rest of your head, it is also a **humidifier, filter and heater**.

The problem is that **the nose only knows how to do 1 thing – to congest (and sometimes decongest)**! If the air is too dry, the nose congests to moisturize the air for your lungs. If the air is too **cold**, the nose congests to heat up the air. If the air is **dusty, dirty or full of allergens** (pollens, **smoke particles**, grass, “hypoallergenic” pets) the nose will congest to try and clean itself and prevent you from getting sick. By the way, **when you are sick**, that is when the nose really shines producing **lots of mucous, phlegm, cough** and – you guessed it – major congestion. It is trying to get rid of all those viruses and bacteria after all. So congestion is actually a normal nose function. **People only get problems when there is too much congestion. This is the Supernose.**

So what actually is congestion? Technically, it is a combination of blood vessel dilation and histamine release. I find it easier to think of it like **a fully soaked sponge**. In a **normal nose the sponge lining is thin and flat**. When the nose gets excited, the lining quickly becomes “soaked” with thousands of tiny blood vessels becoming slightly bigger to increase blood flow. It only takes a brief temperature change (cold to warm air) or a drink of wine (alcohol is a major blood dilator) to **soak the nasal sponge**.

Unfortunately, **your nose does not care if you can breathe through it or not**. It only cares about protecting you and your lungs. When one or both of your nose holes are congested (for example when you lay down – since a lot of your blood goes to your head when you sleep) **your sinuses – including your middle ears - can back up and hurt**. Some people temporarily lose their hearing or sense of **smell**. Other get minor **nose bleeds** or get **headaches** – all because your **nose is too good at its job!**

So how do we “treat” the Supernose? The answer is almost never surgery because **we cannot surgically remove your spongy nose lining** – that can actually be fatal. Surgery of the nose and sinuses has to do more with the **bones**. Basically we either move the bones around, make the sinus openings bigger or “renovate” by taking down some of the small sinus walls to make an “open concept” grand room. That's the idea behind sinus surgery. **The majority of the lining always stays behind.**

In some cases, the bones may be extremely bent or you may even have a growth in there. In those **rare cases surgery may be needed**. However, **95% of the time surgery does not change your congestion**. Instead, **the right medicine, in the right places**, can shrink down the spongy lining and make the nose think you live in Hawaii! My favorite is rinsing your nose and sinuses with a supercharged version of **Neilmed Bottle Sinus Rinse** called **Pulmicort sinonasal lavage**. This takes away the viruses, allergies, chemicals and dust that your nose is so busy trying to get rid of for you. That should leave you breathing a lot easier.

Dr. Jon M. Adamis MD, FRCS (C)

Elimination Diet Trial For Nose Congestion:

1. No Gluten for 3 days
(if this doesn't work, go to step 2.)

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2. No Dairy for 3
different days
(if this doesn't work, go to step 3.)

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3. No Eggs for 3
different days

How to use Sinus Rinse – The SUPER GENTLE Method.

Always use this Squeeze Bottle. Never use a NetiPot because they flood your ears. Put in warm (like your bath), distilled (can buy it at Walmart dirt cheap) water up to the line. Add the Crystals (either the Ocean Crystals that come with the Kits or Xylitol Sweetener Crystals (see below***). Next add any medicine I may have prescribed (such as Pulmicort). If I don't give you a prescription, then just go with the crystals.

Screw the top back on the bottle, cover the hole on top and shake it really well. Always do a 'test squirt' into the sink first to make sure you clear out any dust, snot or dry crystals in the tube.

Now, gently wet your inner nostril and let the solution fall into the sink. Try to go about 1 inch into the nose but no more. Most viruses, allergies, perfumes and dust gather in the first inch of the nose and then make it super stuffy. Go back and forth between the nostrils until the bottle is empty. Don't worry I know it seems like a lot but you can usually do it under 60 seconds! If you feel adventurous (or if it feels much better for you) you can certainly go in deeper and even come out the other side BUT always go super slow and gentle.

