Using Saline Nose Drops with Bulb Syringe

Your child may have a stuffy nose. This may disturb breathing, eating, and/or sleeping. An older child can clear his/her nose. When a child cannot do so, saline drops and a bulb syringe may help loosen and remove mucus. Saline (salt-water) nose drops can be purchased over-the-counter. Saline nose drops can be made by stirring ¼ teaspoon of salt into one measuring cup of warm water.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

- **Do not** feed your child just before using saline and bulb syringe.
- Place your child flat on his/her back. Tilt the head slightly back. This can be done by rolling up a small blanket or towel and placing it under your child's shoulders.

LET YOUR CAREGIVER KNOW ABOUT:

- Birth defects or medical problems that may affect your baby's breathing.
- Medicines or treatments that you are already giving your baby.

TREATMENTS/PROCEDURES

Using Nasal Drops

- Use a clean nose dropper and place one to two drops of the saline in one nostril only.
  - The nose drops may make the child sneeze.
- Pick up or hold your child with the head tilted back for 1-2 minutes after giving the nasal drops.
  - This should be enough time for the saline to thin the mucus.
- Suction your child's nose using a bulb syringe (see next section).

Using a Bulb Syringe

- Take a clean bulb syringe and squeeze the bulb to blow out the air.
- While still squeezing the bulb, insert the thin end of bulb syringe into your child's nostril. Point it away from the middle of the nose.
- Let the air come back into the bulb. This should suction the mucus from your child's nostril.
- Remove the syringe from your child's nose. Squeeze the bulb onto a tissue to empty its contents.
- Repeat as often as needed to clear the mucus.

The whole procedure can be repeated for the other nostril.

RISKS & COMPLICATIONS OF THE PROCEDURE

Doing this right after a feeding may cause your baby to throw up (*vomit*).

AFTER USING THE BULB SYRINGE

- Use soft tissues to gently wipe the area around your child's nose to clean away mucus. This can help stop skin irritation.
- Wash and clean the cup, dropper and bulb syringe with soapy water.
- Clear out mucus from the bulb by squeezing the bulb several times while rinsing.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use saline nose drops often to keep the nose open and not stuffy. It works better than suctioning with the bulb syringe, which can cause minor bruising inside the child’s nose. Sometimes, you may have to use bulb suctioning. However, it is strongly believed that saline rinsing of the nostrils is more effective in keeping the nose open. This is especially important for the infant who needs an open nose to be able to suck with a closed mouth.
- Throw away used salt water. Make a new solution every time.

- Always clean your child's nose before feeding.
- **Do not** use the same solution and dropper for another child.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Stuffiness last longer than one week.
- Your child develops a cough.
- Your child will not take enough fluids.
- Your child is finicky and does not sleep at night.
- Your child gets worse instead of better.
- You have questions about the general well being of your child.
- Your child is spitting (*drooling*) much more than usual.
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child is under 3 months and has a fever.
- Your child's skin looks blue.
- Your child is having trouble breathing. You should suspect this if the baby shows:
  - The nose openings flare out.
  - Rapid and/or noisy breathing.
  - "Pulling in" of the skin between the ribs while breathing.
- Your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

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