Normal Saline Nose Drops
(Salt Water Nose Drops)

WHY DOES MY BABY NEED THESE DROPS?

Your baby is not able to breathe through the mouth. And if your baby has a stuffy nose, it will be hard to breathe. This also makes it hard for baby to eat and sleep. When your baby has a stuffy nose, you can treat it by putting salt water (saline) nose drops in the nose, and using a bulb syringe to clean it out.

HOW DO I GET THE DROPS?

- You can buy the drops over the counter (without a prescription).
- You can make the drops yourself:
  - One cup of warm water.
  - Add 1/2 teaspoon salt, and stir.
  - Store at room temperature.
  - Make a new batch every day.

HOW DO I USE THE DROPS?

- With a clean medicine dropper, put 1 or 2 drops in each side of baby's nose. This helps to loosen the secretions in the nose. Do not use this dropper for any other medicine.
- Squeeze the air out of the suction bulb before inserting into baby's nose.
- While still squeezing the bulb flat, gently place the tip of the bulb into a nostril and let air come back into the bulb.
- The suction will pull snot out of the nose and into the bulb.
- Repeat on other nostril.
- Squeeze syringe several times onto a tissue and wash the tip well in soapy water. Store the bulb with the tip side down on paper towel.
- Use the syringe only in combination with the saline drops to avoid irritating baby's nostrils.

WHEN SHOULD I SUCTION MY BABY'S NOSE?

Suctioning is used when your baby has a lot of snot in the nose. You may use the bulb syringe to suction your baby's nose:

- Before feeding.
- Before putting your baby down for naps.
- Not more than every 3 hours to avoid irritating baby's nostrils.

HOW LONG DO I DO THIS?

Until the snot clears up, usually 7 days, or until baby breathes more easily.

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE MY BABY TO THE DOCTOR?

- If snot changes to green or yellow.
- If snot gets thicker.
- **If your baby is 3 months or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4 º F (38º C) or higher.**
- If your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- If stuffy nose lasts 10 days or longer.
- If baby is having more trouble breathing or feeding.

Easy-to-Read style based on content from Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas, Texas

Document Released: 10/15/2010
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.