

A Shrink Studies SCUBA Clearing

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Nasal Irrigation Helps Divers Clear Ears Naturally

Middle "ear squeeze" caused by difficulty equalizing the pressure in middle ears during descent and ascent is among the most common problems in recreational scuba divers. A recent study showed that buffered saline nasal irrigation can help naturally.

Many divers use pre-dive oral or spray decongestants to help equalize pressure in their middle ears and sinuses. NeilMed Pharmaceuticals, Inc. of Santa Rosa, California, sponsored the study to determine the efficacy and safety of buffered saline nasal irrigation among experienced divers to help equalize pressure in their middle ears and reduce their use of decongestants.

Between November 2005 and September 2006, 100 experienced scuba divers completed web-based "Before" and "After" questionnaires. They were invited to participate after reporting difficulty equalizing the pressure in their middle ears or using decongestants in an earlier diver safety survey conducted by myself (Dr. Colvard). After completing the "Before" questionnaire, the study participants were sent free samples of NeilMed's SINUS RINSE™ buffered saline nasal irrigation system. They completed the "After" questionnaire after using the product and diving.

Forty-four (44.0%) reported less nasal congestion after using SINUS RINSE™ and 10 (10.0%) reported more nasal congestion. Sixty-nine (69.0%) reported less frequent difficulty in clearing or equalizing their ears and five (5%) reported more frequent difficulty. Forty-one of 68 divers (60.3%) for whom use of oral decongestants were applicable reported decreased or discontinued use. Twenty-one of 38 divers (55.3%) for whom use of decongestant sprays or drops were applicable reported decreased or discontinued use. None reported increased use of decongestants in any form. Seventy-two (72.0%) would recommend the SINUS RINSE™ system to other divers and three (3%) would not.

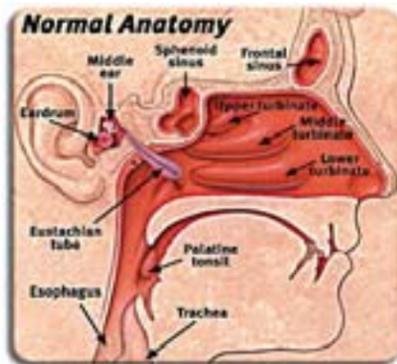
Experienced scuba divers continue to dive despite the medical risk of nasal congestion and difficulty clearing or equalizing the pressure in their middle ears. Buffered saline nasal irrigation can effectively and safely reduce nasal congestion and decrease the frequency and difficulty in clearing or equalizing the pressure in the middle ears of many divers. Additionally, nasal irrigation can decrease the use of decongestants, either oral or spray or drops, and reduce the risk of re-



Nasal rinse Both graphics ©2000 – 2005 NeilMed Pharmaceuticals

bound congestion and reverse middle ear squeeze during or after a dive when the effect of the decongestants may have worn off.

A buffered saline nasal irrigation system like NeilMed's SINUS RINSE™ appears to be an economical, convenient, safe, and effective natural alternative to decongestants for many recreational divers who have nasal congestion and difficulty equalizing pressure in their middle ears. The same may be true for airline passengers and flight crews, but that group has not been studied yet.



WARNING: DO NOT RINSE IF NASAL PASSAGE IS COMPLETELY BLOCKED OR IF YOU HAVE AN EAR INFECTION OR BLOCKED EARS.

Q: Can nasal rinses prevent or reduce a head cold and/or flu symptoms?

A: Saline rinses, in the very earliest stages of a head cold and/or flu, may reduce the incidence and duration of symptoms of the sinus and nasal infection.

Q: What is the advantage of nasal rinses?

A: Some amount of mucus production from the nasal and sinus lining is normal. Allergies and infections will cause excessive mucus production. This will create nasal and sinus symptoms such as runny and stuffy nose and post nasal drip. When the nasal rinse is performed, you wash away mucus, allergy causing particles and irritants such as pollens, dust particles, pollutants and bacteria, thus reducing the inflammation of the mucus membrane. Normal mucosa will fight infections and allergies better and symptoms will be reduced.

Pet of the Week

“Dorothy” was found under a container with her mom and brother, “Dilan.” The puppies were in reasonably good shape, but the mom was in such bad condition, starving and emaciated, that she had to be put to sleep. But the pups were rescued just in time and now they’re roly poly cuties. Dorothy should grow up to be a medium sized dog. She’s a lot of fun, smart and very affectionate. And she should take to training well and quickly. As are all the other pets up for adoption at the Bonaire Animal Shelter Dorothy is healthy, has had her shots, worming and testing and will be sterilized when she’s old enough. All that is covered in the NAf105 adoption fee. It’s the best pet deal in town and not only are you saving the life of a little animal but you know you’re getting a superior pet, one that’s healthy and social!



“Dorothy”

The Shelter is on the Lagoon Road, open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 1 pm. Tel. 717-4989.

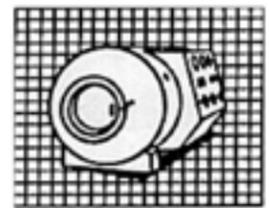
This year marks the 10th year for this column, “Pet of the Week.” Although the name of this newspaper changed from *Port Call* to *The Bonaire Reporter* in January 2000, the name of the column has remained the same. Some things never change! Thanks to all Shelter staff that I’ve worked with over the years and most of all thanks to the terrific pets who took the time to pose for the camera. I’m happy to say that a majority of them found good and loving homes. □ L.D.

You can check Sinus Rinse™ out at <http://www.neilmed.com>. □ David F Colvard, MD

David F. Colvard, M.D., is a private psychiatrist and clinical investigator in Raleigh NC, and a divemaster. He hosts www.DivePsych.com which provides evidence-based information for divers on psychological and stress factors in scuba divers. □



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