

# Why cleanse your nose?

**Nose cleansing** is a yoga practice known as *neti*, which is rinsing your nose with lukewarm salt water (isotonic solution; 0.9 % salt).

**Neti is recommended** for alleviating nasal and sinus disorders, improving nasal breathing, increasing mental clarity, and as a preparation for yoga and meditation.

**Many people** cleanse their nose in the morning as a refreshing start to the day. Others prefer the benefits of neti after coming home from work.

**This simple practice** cleanses and moistens the nasal passages and mucous membranes.

On the surface of the mucous membranes – present in the nostrils, sinuses, trachea, bronchial tubes and auditory canals (between the nose and middle ear) – are microscopic hairs called *cilia*. Nose cleansing stimulates the cilia's sweeping movements, which remove phlegm, dust, pollen, bacteria and viruses.

**This is one of the reasons** why neti helps in relieving and preventing the common cold, sinusitis, asthma, allergies and infections of the airways, as well as problems caused by air pollution.

**Dry environments** reduce the cilia's effectiveness by drying out the mucous membranes. Nose cleansing restores their natural moisture and reduces swelling

of the mucous membranes, which causes nasal congestion. Neti may be beneficial during pregnancy and as prevention against snoring.

**Nose cleansing stimulates and relaxes** the area around the eyes and forehead. This may reduce headaches caused by nervous tension. Some experience clearer vision or an enhanced sense of smell.

Others find neti a useful aid to stop smoking.

**When you do neti regularly**, breathing through your nose becomes easier. The incoming air is warmed and filtered. Nitrogen monoxide, produced in the sinuses, is carried with the breath to the lungs, where it dilates the blood vessels, thus increasing oxygen uptake.

**In many countries** nose cleansing is an age-old folk remedy for preventing the common cold.

In the early 20th century, pots and sprays for nose cleansing were available at chemist shops around Europe. This practice fell into disuse until the 1970s, when it was revived through the increased interest in yoga.

**Today many doctors** have discovered the benefits of neti and recommend its regular use.

*"Nasal rinsing improves your general state of health. The more regularly you rinse your nose, the better and more sustained the health effects you achieve". (Prof. Thomas Schmidt, MD, Hannover Medical University)*

