

HEALTH

Sanitize Your Nose: Help Protect Yourself and Others from Infection

NewsUSA



(NU) - Most people know that practicing good hand hygiene, such as washing or sanitizing the hands regularly, can help reduce the risk of infection. However, many are overlooking a key culprit in the spread of germs: the nose. Together with hand hygiene, sanitizing the nose is a simple step that can help prevent the spread of germs and enhance overall health.

The moist, hairy skin inside the nostrils is the perfect environment for potentially dangerous germs to grow and multiply. The nose is like a revolving door for germs, allowing them to enter and exit the body. Sneezing, coughing or touching the nose can spread infectious germs to others. In turn, touching the nose - which a person does more than 100 times a day on average - can also spread germs from the hand to the nose. But sanitizing the nose interrupts the cycle of contamination between the hands and nose and can help reduce the spread of germs that cause infection.

Sanitizing the nose, also referred to as nasal decolonization, is a proven infection prevention measure that has been practiced by health care professionals for decades.

A 2020 American Journal of Infection Control (AJIC) study shows a decrease in infections to zero when an alcohol-based nasal antiseptic is added to existing infection prevention protocols. Due to the extensive research showing that sanitizing the nose significantly reduces infection rates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all hospitals include nasal decolonization of patients in certain situations in which they are at a higher risk of infection.

Despite being an established

health care practice, only 3 out of 10 Americans understand that sanitizing the nose helps reduce infection risk, according to a recent survey by YouGov.*

Given the positive impact that hospitals have seen with sanitizing patients' noses, it is time this practice is adopted by the general public. Health care experts advise that sanitizing the nose is a simple and effective way to help protect oneself and others from infection and should be part of daily hygiene practices.

It is important to note that not all nasal products are formulated to kill germs in the nose. Many over-the-counter nasal hygiene products can help clean but do not sanitize the nose. These include products such as nasal sprays to help alleviate dryness, congestion or inflammation from cold, flu or allergies; nasal rinse products that flush out mucus and debris from the nose; and steam or humidifiers that help loosen mucus in the nose.

There are three solutions currently available that are proven to kill germs in the nose and are clinically supported with hospital studies: alcohol-based nasal antiseptic (Nozin), povidone iodine antiseptic (various brands, including 3M) and mupirocin antibiotic (various brands, including Bactroban).

Learn more about the role of the nose in preventing the spread of infection at [SanitizeYourNose.org](https://www.sanitizeyournose.org).

**Figures are from YouGov Plc. Fieldwork was undertaken between 21st - 26th May 2020, the survey was carried out online and the total sample size was 1301 adults. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all US adults (aged 18+). The national survey was conducted by YouGov on behalf of Nozin.*