

# Blocked noses

Babies have narrow nostrils and therefore when they have a cold are easily blocked by snot and mucus and swollen mucus membranes.

Up to the age of 6 months, babies breathe almost exclusively through their noses. To be able to eat, infants have to be able to breathe at the same time. If their nose is blocked, they let go of the breast/bottle and have a hard time getting enough to eat.

To make it easier for them to breathe you can flush saline solution through their nose to flush away mucus.

Even though the nostrils are narrow, the outer opening is quite large. So it's not enough to drip breastmilk or saline into the nose. You need to really *flush* the liquid through, 1-2 mL per nostril. A plastic syringe without a pointy tip is perfect for the job, and can be bought at the pharmacy.

Hold your baby's head with your left hand (if you are right handed) and flush straight into the nostril, not up, with the other hand. Your baby might snort, cough and sputter out some loosened snot, some of it will be swallowed. It can feel scary, but it isn't dangerous. Continue rinsing/flushing until you feel like the nostril is clean.

Something that is important to know is that the outer edges of the nostrils are not sensitive but the middle, the so-called septum, is sensitive to pain. So this means you should angle the syringe to be pointing towards your baby's ear and not towards the middle.

It is completely safe to flush a baby's nose like this and can be repeated as many times as necessary.

It's a good idea to rinse their nose before your baby is going to eat, to make it easier for them to eat.

Saline solution can either be bought at the pharmacy or can be made at home.

If a baby with a cold is still struggling to breathe, or has a hard time eating after nasal flushing, it is time to seek care at a *vårdcentral* or the emergency department.

**Children's emergency department**

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