

Nebulised Saline (page 1 of 2)



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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Kate Nash
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Why have I started on nebulised saline?

Normally you will have been started on saline due to having thick retained secretions within your lungs. The saline loosens the secretions which can make it easier for you to clear them from your lungs.

What is nebulisation?

The inhalation of medications (breathing into the lungs), such as saline, is a very effective and quick method to deliver medication into the lungs and airways. It allows the treatment to be delivered exactly to where it is needed. The medication is nebulised using a compressor system.

The nebuliser creates a 'fine mist'. This is the medication which has been formed into microscopic small particles which can enter the lungs and reach the smaller airways.

Are there any risks or adverse effects?

There are different strengths of saline and the dose you will take will be decided by your doctor. The strengths are 0.9%, 3%, 4.5%, 6% and 7%. The higher the strength, the greater is the potential for side effects. You will therefore be given a test dose by the respiratory team before being given the medication to use at home. This will involve being given a dose of the medication, with breathing tests before and after, to make sure that your lungs do not have any negative reactions to the medication, such as:

- wheezy, tight chest – called bronchospasm.

How do I prepare the saline?

- first wash your hands
- you will need to prepare the following on a clean surface:
 - * ampoule of saline
 - * a nebuliser chamber and mouthpiece and filter set.
- check the ampoule of saline is the prescribed dose and the 'use by' date is still 'in date'.
- pour the saline into the nebuliser chamber.
- put the chamber and mouthpiece together
- attach to the compressor
- turn on the compressor and start nebulising.

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Where can I use the nebuliser?

Saline can be nebulised anywhere, there are no precautions needed.

Is there anything I need to do while I have my nebuliser?

When nebulising we advise you to:

- sit in an upright position
- use a mouthpiece to avoid irritation to the eyes
- breathe at a relaxed comfortable rate
- maintain a good seal with your lips whilst the nebuliser is running and
- do not to talk whilst nebulising.

Once you have finished nebulising (the nebuliser will beep or the solution in the Chamber will start to spit), you should turn off the nebuliser and do the following:

- Throw away the saline ampoule
- Wash your hands
- clean the nebuliser chamber, tubing and mouthpiece after each dose. Exactly how you clean your nebuliser will depend on what system you are using. Please refer to the advice you were given when you were given your nebuliser.

How long do I need to have nebulised saline for?

This will vary from patient to patient, depending on your sputum and how easily it can be cleared. The Saline will be prescribed either by the Consultant or the Specialist Nurse or Physiotherapist. If you are unsure about anything please contact the team.

For further information

Please contact the Respiratory Team

Salisbury District Hospital, Odstock Road, Salisbury.

Telephone: 01722 429220

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