

## ***NASAL STEROID SPRAYS***

Steroid nasal sprays are prescribed for swelling of the lining of the nose (rhinitis) and/or sinuses (sinusitis) which may be due to smoking, allergies or infection. Symptoms may include runny nose, sneezing, itching, and difficulty breathing through the nose, post-nasal drip or pressure and sinus headaches. Both rhinitis and sinusitis can worsen your ear problem by causing swelling around the Eustachian tube that drains the ear into the back of the nose. Treating these problems can be just as important as the direct treatment of your ear condition.

The steroids contained in nasal sprays are very low dose and fortunately, they do not cause the severe side effects associated with prolonged use of steroids that are injected or taken orally.

Use your nasal steroid spray at the same time(s) everyday to get into a routine. Shake the bottle and remove the cover. Blow your nose to remove secretions and then use the spray as explained in the package directions. It may make you sneeze. Some of the spray may go back down the back of your throat but is not harmful. Some patients note a bad taste or mild burning – these are only temporary and not worrisome. Other side effects include dryness of the nose, crusting or slight bleeding. If these occur, apply Vaseline or Polysporin ointment to the inside of your nose twice a day and use a humidifier. See your doctor if you experience a severe nosebleed, recurrent nosebleeds, or severe sore throat.

It may take a week to notice the benefits of using a nasal steroid spray and the full effect may take 2 to 3 weeks to occur. If there has been no improvement after 3 to 4 weeks, stop the spray and see the doctor. Other medications can be tried, or a consult with an allergist or sinus specialist can be arranged if necessary.

Although some patients use these sprays for years without problems, we recommend that you stop using the spray in 2 to 3 months to “give your nose a rest”. It can be started if your symptoms return. Some patients use the spray only at certain times of the year when their rhinitis or sinusitis acts up. Others find that after a period of regular use, they only need to use their spray every other day.

We hope you find this information helpful. Speak with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions we might be able to help you with.