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Low-tech 'blaster' nails sinus problem on the nose

The manufacturer calls its product the SinuCleanse Squeeze. Our tester dubbed it "the noseblaster."

During a spring trip to pollen-dense Nashville, the tester found that the SinuCleanse Squeeze - by which we refer, of course, to the noseblaster - offered temporary relief from badly clogged sinuses.

The instructions are simple: Fill the squeeze bottle with lukewarm water, add one or two packets of dry saline ingredients (SinuCleanse comes with 30 packets), give the bottle a good shake and then insert the tip of the bottle into one nostril; gently squeeze the solution up into one nostril, then the other. This procedure should be conducted, of course, over a sink, preferably in the privacy of one's bathroom.

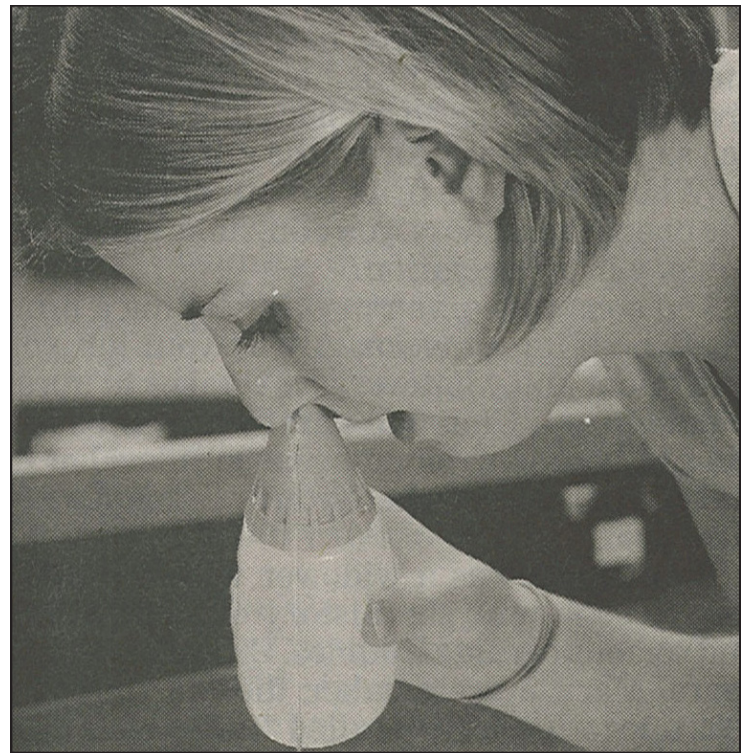
Nasty stuff flowed freely from our tester's nose, so we don't advise trying this on a first date. Fortunately, the tester is part of a long-term happy relationship, so when the sound of the noseblaster in action brought to mind the death throes of a small mammal, it wasn't terribly off-putting.

Another option in the SinuCleanse system is a neti pot, which works similarly to the noseblaster except that the saline solution is slowly poured into the nostrils, with the head tilted just so. Our tester turned his nose up at the neti pot, preferring the more satisfying action of the noseblaster; he continues to use it as needed back home in the Chicago suburbs.

The active ingredients in the dry saline packet are sodium bicarbonate and sodium chloride, also known as baking soda and table salt. So you could mix up your own saline combo, but our tester likes the convenience of the packets.

The two systems are available at CVS Pharmacy and Walgreens and online at sinucleanse.com. SinuCleanse Squeeze lists for \$10.99 on the Web site, the SinuCleanse Neti Pot for \$14.99; a box of 60 saline packets is \$7.99.

A reminder: If you opt to buy the cleansing system locally, use the official name: SinuCleanse Squeeze. Asking for a noseblaster might elicit some puzzled looks. ■



The SinuCleanse Squeeze is best used in privacy or only around those who really love you, but what a relief.

By Denise Joyce
Tribune staff reporter

