

Nasal Washing for 7 - 9 Year Olds

“Imagination Is The Name Of The Game”

This section assumes that your child has been exposed to some water play, such as swimming lessons, is not afraid to put her face in the water, and likes a little adventure. Allowing the child to use the water bottle a few times as a “squirt bottle” outdoors, at the pool or in the tub or shower may attach a “non-medical” feel to it. Encouraging your child to “face up” into the shower also takes away the notion that it is somehow harmful to get water in our faces, ears, eyes, noses. Blowing bubbles in the tub, singing with her face in the shower water, and “talking” underwater in the tub will all help take away her fear of water in the face. (If water in the eyes is a huge issue, consider goggles while getting her used to water in the nose, or you may want to look back at younger ages to look for ideas that may help with your child’s developmental stage.)

Then it is time to “get down to business.” Kids at this age are usually very interested in bodily functions, so are fascinated at the idea that mucus which is allowed to stand inside their nose and sinuses “transforms” into nasty stuff which needs to be cleaned out. It may help to reassure your child that this is a “*sealed*” system, meaning: *what they squirt up into their nose will come back out their mouth or nose*. It cannot somehow magically get into their brain or eyes or ears.

While being gently firm about the necessity of this activity, ***turn it into a game***. They can understand the idea of their nose and sinuses being like a cave. Inside, it is dark and warm, with moisture dripping off the walls. The moisture collects on the floor and hardens, forming “snot rocks,” or pools of “booger juice.” (Boys especially like the visuals of this!) If allowed to continue, this nasty stuff can clog up their cave. If they want the “air people” (or whatever) to be allowed through, they must wash out the nasty stuff, and keep the passages clean of the snot rocks and booger juice. (Those with a fascination for the gross can actually watch the nasty stuff wash out into a bowl or the sink! Those with weaker stomachs should close their eyes.)

Girls this age may like a game of a princess or pony or benevolent being living in the back of a cave which she needs to keep clean for access to the world beyond. Kids this age have GREAT imaginations. If allowed to make up their OWN story about THEIR cave, and the reason for which they must sweep it clean with a water hose every day, you will find they are much more compliant, because the story almost becomes real for them.

Setting up a sticker chart works well at this age, especially if you can find stickers that relate to your child’s “story”. Positive reinforcement for compliance works better than nagging about non-compliance, and is lots more fun. Keep smiling!

As always, be well,

Dr. Hana