

# Let's Talk About...

## Nasal Suctioning

### What is nasal suctioning?

**Nasal** [NAY-zuhl] **suctioning** [SUK-shun-eeng] is used to clear mucus from your child's nose, throat, and mouth so they can breathe more easily.

### Why does my child need nasal suctioning?

Your child's body is making extra mucus that needs to be cleared. Mucus is a thick fluid that helps protect the respiratory system. However, the body sometimes makes too much of it because of these reasons:

- Infections, such as a cold, flu, or bronchiolitis
- Allergies
- Air quality (dry air, pollution, or smoke)

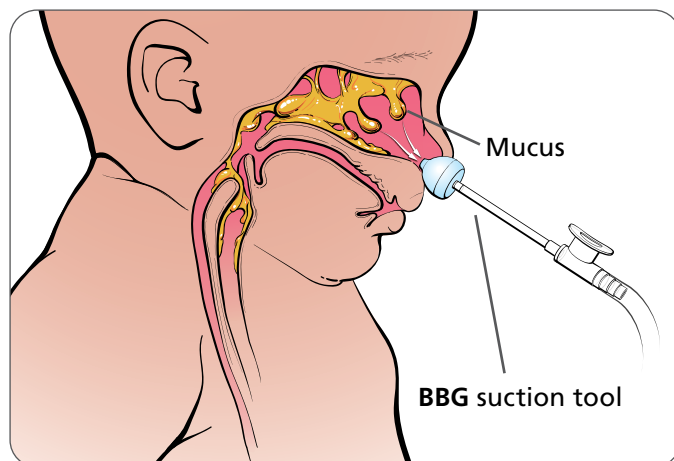
While in the hospital, your child may need nasal suctioning if:

- Mucus is seen or heard in your child's nose or mouth
- Sounds are heard in your child's chest that could mean there is too much mucus in their lungs
- Your child needs supplemental (extra) oxygen
- Your child is working hard to breathe, breathing too fast, or using more muscles to breathe
- Your child cannot breathe and eat at the same time

### How is nasal suctioning done?

The main ways to remove mucus are by:

- BBG suctioning
- Nasopharyngeal [nay-zoh-fair-en-GEE-uhl] (NP) suctioning
- Bulb suctioning
- Using a nasal-oral aspirator



### What are BBG and NP suction?

BBG suction and NP suction are commonly used in the hospital. Both types use constant, mild suction to gently remove mucus.

**During BBG suctioning**, the suction tip is placed against the opening of the nose. Mucus is removed without inserting anything inside the nostrils.

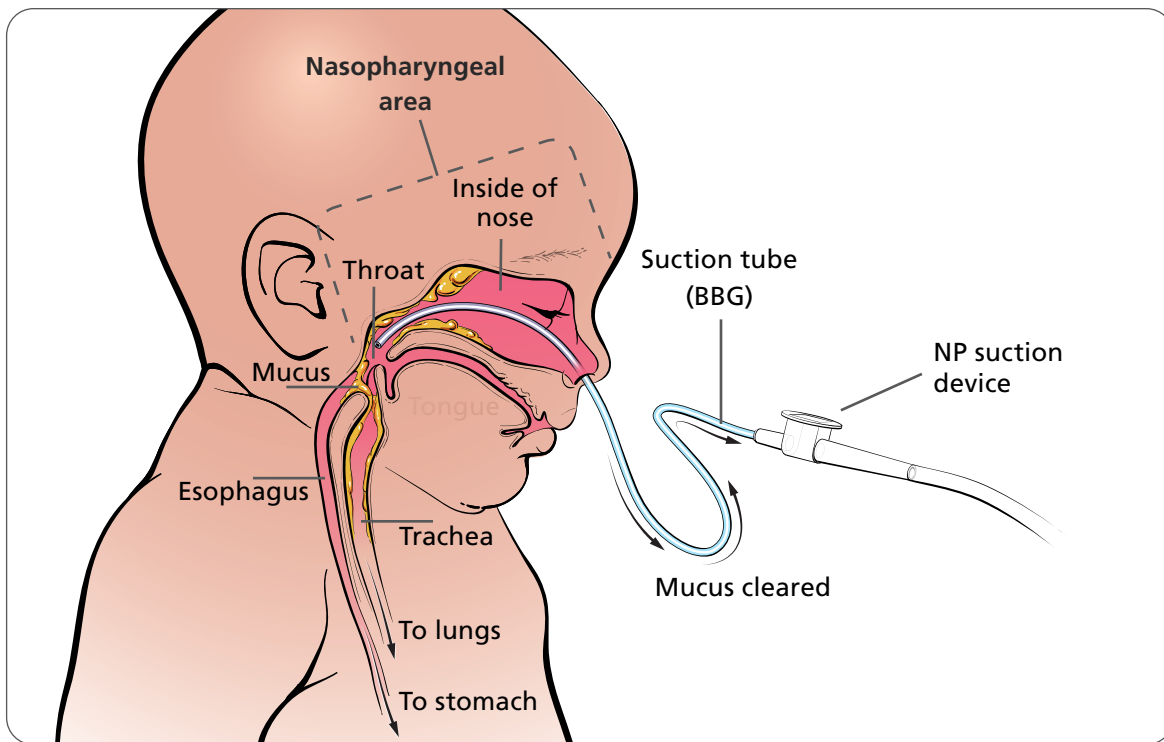
**During NP suctioning**, a thin tube is attached to a larger suction tube. The smaller tube is placed inside the nostril until it reaches the throat. Suction then helps remove mucus from deep inside the nose and throat. The tube may make your child cough, which also helps to clear out mucus.

### What is bulb suction?

A bulb suction device is a round, rubbery object with a short tube. Squeezing the bulb by hand creates a small amount of suction that can help remove mucus from the nose and mouth. It can be used in the hospital, doctor's office, or at home. See [page 3](#) for instructions on how to do bulb suctioning.

### What is a nasal-oral aspirator?

A nasal-oral aspirator is similar to a bulb suction device but uses a mouthpiece to create suction. The suction lasts longer than a bulb suction device, which can help to better remove mucus from your child. See [page 3](#) for information on how to do nasal-oral aspiration.



## How long will my child need suctioning?

Suctioning may need to be done several times to get all the mucus out of your child. How much suctioning is needed will depend on:

- How sick your child is
- The amount and thickness of the mucus
- How well your child responds to suctioning

When your child is feeling better and is able to breathe comfortably, sleep well, and eat easily, suctioning may no longer be needed. This may be true even if the nose sounds very stuffy.

Sometimes saline drops alone are enough to clear out the nose. If saline drops alone are not working, then use the drops followed by bulb suctioning or a nasal-oral aspirator (see [next page](#)).

## How can I suction my child at home?

Usually, children stay in the hospital until mucus can be managed with bulb suctioning or a nasal-oral aspirator, and breathing is no longer difficult. Family members are taught how to suction to help clear mucus when at home.

## Here are some tips for bulb suctioning:

- Explain to your child what you are doing.
- Use tissues to clean the bulb between suctionings.
- Use a new suction bulb for each illness. When your child is better, throw the suction bulb away.
- Use a different suction bulb for each child. Don't share suction bulbs between children.
- Keep your child from moving their head too much and grabbing the suction bulb.
  - **If there is only one person available to suction:**
    - Wrap your child's body in a towel or blanket, making sure arms and hands are inside the bundle.
    - Keep one hand on your child at times, as your child may wiggle out of the blankets.
    - Make sure you hold their head still to prevent injuring the inside of the nose.
  - **If there are two people available,** one person should gently hold your child's head with one hand while using the other hand to hold both of your child's hands out of the way. The other person will suction.

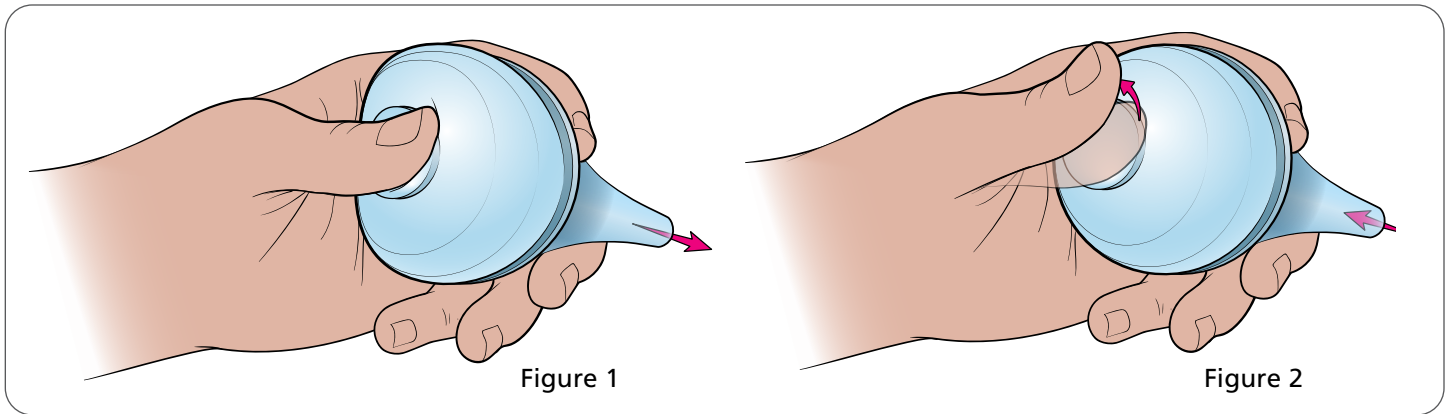


Figure 1

Figure 2

### To use the suction bulb properly:

- 1 Put a few drops of saline into each nostril. Use enough to loosen the fluids and allow for easier suctioning. Buy the drops recommended by your doctor or pharmacist. Do not try to make them yourself. Never use over-the-counter nose drops that contain any medicine.
- 2 Hold the bulb with the tip between your first and middle fingers (see figure 1). With your thumb, squeeze the bulb and push out all the air.
- 3 Gently insert the tip into a nostril. If possible, hold the opposite nostril closed right before releasing the suction bulb.
- 4 Slowly release your thumb on the bulb. As you release your thumb, mucus will be suctioned out of the nose (see figure 2).
- 5 Remove the suction bulb and release the other nostril.
- 6 Clean the mucus from the bulb by squeezing it out onto the tissue. Rinse the bulb with water.
- 7 Repeat these steps with the other nostril.

It may be helpful to also suction your child's mouth. When suctioning the mouth, be sure to put the tip of the suction bulb in the side of your child's mouth to avoid causing your child to gag.

Allow time for your child to recover and breathe in between suctioning attempts.

### To use the nasal-oral aspirator properly:

Please refer to the manufacturer's instructions included with the device.

For video instructions on how to use the NeilMed Naspira Nasal-Oral Aspirator, please scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone or visit:



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQgY\\_gmSORw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UQgY_gmSORw)

If your child is sick with an infection, it is not known if it can be spread to you through the use of this device. Please consider this risk before use if you have a chronic health condition.

### Are there any complications from suctioning?

If your child's nose is suctioned often, the inside of the nose may swell, dry out, become irritated, or bleed. Suctioning should be done as gently as possible and only as often as it is needed. In the hospital, your child will likely need to be suctioned quite often. As your child gets better, the need for suction will decrease.