

## Steroid Nose Sprays

A steroid nose spray is commonly used to treat allergies of the nose such as hay fever and persistent (perennial) rhinitis. Steroid sprays reduce inflammation in the nose, and usually work well. There are different brands.

### How to use a steroid nose spray

- Blow your nose.
- Tilt your head forward so your chin is nearly touching your chest.
- Hold the spray bottle upright.
- Insert the tip of the spray bottle just inside one nostril, and apply one or two sprays as prescribed.
- Do not angle the canister towards the middle or side of the nose, but straight up. With your head tilted forward the spray should go right to the back of your nose.
- Repeat in the other nostril.



### What if my nose is very blocked or runny

Sometimes a very blocked or runny nose will prevent the steroid spray from getting through to work. A decongestant nose spray, which you can buy at pharmacies, may then be useful. A decongestant spray has an immediate effect to clear a blocked nose. You can then use the steroid spray once the nose is clear.

(Note: decongestant sprays are not usually advised for more than a few days. If you use one for more than 5-7 days, a 'rebound', more severe congestion of the nose may develop. In contrast, steroid sprays work well to clear symptoms, and can be used for long periods.)

### Some points about steroid nose sprays

- For maximum benefit, use the spray as often as prescribed.
- It takes several days for a steroid spray to build up its effect. So, you will not have any relief of symptoms when you first start one. It commonly starts to work within a week, but it may take up to 6 weeks to fully control the inflammation, and to get the maximum benefit.
- If you use the spray for hay fever, it is best to start using it 2-3 weeks before the hay fever season starts.
- Once symptoms are gone, you still need to take it regularly to keep symptoms away.

- Your doctor may advise to reduce the dose to a lower 'maintenance' dose once symptoms have gone. The aim is to find the lowest dose that controls symptoms.
- An occasional forgotten dose should not be a problem, but symptoms usually return after a few days if you stop taking the spray.
- Some people only need a nose spray for the hay fever season. If you have a persistent rhinitis, you may have to take treatment long-term to keep symptoms away. Long-term use of a steroid nose spray is thought to be safe.
- Steroid nose sprays occasionally cause dryness, crusting, and bleeding of the nose. If this occurs, stop it for a few days and then restart. Other side effects or problems are rare (read the packet leaflet for details).