



Dr. Sarah Morrison  
Paediatric ENT Surgeon

# WHAT ARE NASAL STEROID SPRAYS?

A nasal steroids spray is a medicated spray applied to the inside of the nose. It is a topical medication that is absorbed through the nasal mucosa.

## WHAT DO NASAL STEROID SPRAYS DO?

Nasal steroid sprays reduce inflammation of the nasal mucosa and reduce the size of the adenoids at the back of the nose. This doesn't occur immediately but takes several weeks of regular use.

## WHAT ARE NASAL STEROID SPRAYS USED FOR?

Nasal steroid sprays are used to treat allergic rhinitis (hay fever), chronic rhinitis (nasal discharge or sinusitis in children), nasal blockage and snoring in children.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF NASAL STEROIDS?

There are many different types of nasal steroid spray. Each is a slightly different type of steroid, which has slightly different properties.

## WHAT TYPES OF NASAL STEROID SPRAYS ARE RECOMMENDED IN CHILDREN?

The steroids sprays that are recommended for use in children have the lowest possible systemic absorption. This means that less than 0.01 percent of the spray reaches the body's blood circulation.

The recommend types of nasal steroid sprays recommend in children are :

### **FLUTICASONE (GENERIC NAME)**

Avamys or flixonase (prescription is required)

### **MOMETASONE (GENERIC NAME)**

Nasonex (available over the counter, chemist own brand available as well)

## HOW DOES MY CHILD USE THE NASAL STEROID SPRAY?

The spray should be administered once per nostril, once to twice daily depending on the recommendation of your doctor. It does not matter what time of day the spray is administered.

Prior to administration of the spray, encourage your child to blow their nose. Some families find using a saline spray, helps the child blow their nose prior to using a steroid spray.



The technique is to aim the nozzle of the spray toward to corner of the eye on the same side as the nostril. It should not be sprayed directly up or back into the nose. If the spray is tasted immediately, then it is not in the nose. The spray will be swallowed and deactivated in the stomach. It is safe to respray if that occurs.

Below is a video link from the Royal Children's Hospital explaining how to use nasal sprays.

[https://www.rch.org.au/genmed/clinical\\_resources/Asthma\\_-\\_using\\_a\\_nasal\\_spray/](https://www.rch.org.au/genmed/clinical_resources/Asthma_-_using_a_nasal_spray/)

## HOW LONG DOES MY CHILD USE THE NASAL STEROID SPRAY FOR?

Nasal steroid sprays don't work instantly. It takes several weeks before the maximal impact is seen. It is recommended that children trialing nasal steroid spray allow at least 6 - 8 weeks to determine if the spray is beneficial.

If the spray is beneficial, it is safe to use on an ongoing basis. In children, we try to minimise the regular use of medications. At some point, stopping the nasal steroid spray is require to determine if the child still requires the spray. If symptoms return, then it is safe to restart the nasal spray. This is best discussed with your doctor.

## WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE NASAL STEROID SPRAY?

Nasal steroids have extremely low systemic absorption (almost none). Therefore, there are no impacts on the child's growth or development. The common side effect is a nose bleed. If this occurs, stop using the nasal steroid spray for 1-2 weeks. After the nose bleeds settle for a period, restart the steroid spray. If nose bleeds occur regularly then it is best to stop using the nasal steroid spray.

Medications that can help reduce nose bleeds are :

**Chlorsig ointment** applied directly into the nostril twice a day for a week

**Nozoil drops** applied into the nostril daily as a prevention measure.