

Why xylitol in a nasal spray

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On November 24th last year (2014) Kristen wrote to Dr. Axe (at DrAxe.com) asking what the xylitol in her nasal spray did. Dr. Axe hasn't answered.

Two years ago a California researcher sent e-mails to several hundred users of this nasal spray asking why they took it. Most of the responses had to do with sinus problems or nasal stuffiness, so Kristen is certainly not alone in wondering what it does. The point is that it does keep the nose clean. The question Kristen asks is what role the xylitol has in this spray and is it harmful in any way.

There are two things xylitol does in the nose: it pulls fluid into the nose so that nasal defenses work better, and; it makes it harder for the harmful bacteria to hold on in the nose. First the washing: the normal way the nose cleans itself is with a broom and material to hold onto all of the pollutants. The broom is made up of cilia, microscopic hairs that wave back and forth in a sweeping motion. The material it sweeps is the mucus made by cells in the nose that picks up all of the pollutants in the nose and hangs onto them so they can be swept out. They are swept out through the back of the nose where we swallow them and recycle the whole mess in our stomachs. Water is key to both of these cleaning elements. The cilia need water, in what is called the airway surface fluid, in order to sweep effectively, and the mucus needs water from that fluid in order to become the sticky, yet watery enough to flow, mucus. When xylitol is in the nose it works by osmosis to pull water into the airway surface fluid and it remains in the nose for a few hours, which is why you should use it regularly, like whenever you wash your hands.

Is it safe? You can spray your nose every hour of the day, 24 times, both sides, and you will get about half a plum's worth of xylitol. It is not absorbed onto the body from the nose; it just works locally in the nose to do what it does.

The other thing it does is unhook bacteria. Before bacteria can infect us they need to get to us and they need to hold on. Washing your hands is the best way we have to keep them from getting to us, but if they do manage most of them get into our noses so washing your nose regularly is the best way to keep them from infecting us.

There are lots of problems that start in the nose: allergies are sensed there, asthma is more often triggered there, ear infections in children and sinus infections in everyone begin after infecting bacteria hold on and multiply in the nose. A clean nose, like clean hands, prevents many of these problems. That's a good reason to use it. ■ If you want more information on this my book, *No More Allergies, Asthma or Sinus Infections*, tells more of the story along with the studies showing how and why it works. Go to Amazon or the donate section at 'Who We Ar'" to purchase it.