

What is bulb suctioning?

A bulb syringe is used to suction (remove) mucus from your baby's mouth or nose. Suctioning will make it easier for your baby to breathe. Babies breathe only through their noses until they are about 4 months old.

When should I suction my baby's nose?

- If needed, it is best to suction your baby's nose and mouth before a feeding, nap or bedtime.
- If your baby has a stuffy nose, suction their nose right before feedings. This makes it easier for your baby to nurse or take a bottle. Have the bulb syringe nearby when you are ready to feed them. This way, you can remove any milk or formula that comes up into your baby's nose and makes it hard to breathe.
- **Avoid suctioning after feeding. This may cause your baby to vomit (throw up).**
- Do not use the bulb syringe more than 3 times a day to keep your baby's nose from getting sore.

How do I use saline nose drops?

To thin the mucus, use 2 drops of saline (salt water) or distilled water in the nose before suctioning. You can buy these drops at a pharmacy or grocery store.

How do I suction my baby's nose?

1. Gather these supplies:
 - Tissues
 - Saline
 - Bulb syringe
 - Small towel or blanket
2. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
3. Roll a towel or blanket.
4. Lay your baby on their back with the rolled towel or blanket under their shoulder to support and extend their neck.
Do not overextend your baby's neck (tip their head back too far).
5. Using a clean nose dropper, put 2 drops of saline into 1 side of your baby's nose. Wait 1 minute.
6. Follow these steps to suction the side of the nose where you put the drops:
 - Squeeze air out of the bulb.
 - Gently place the tip of the bulb in the nose about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.



In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Bulb suctioning, continued

- Slowly let go of the bulb. Let the bulb fill with air and thinned mucus. **Never hold the other nostril closed while suctioning.**
- Remove the bulb from your baby's nose.
- Squeeze the mucus into a tissue.
- Repeat steps 5 and 6 on the other side of the nose.
- Wash your hands again.



How do I clean the bulb syringe?

To clean the bulb syringe:

1. Squeeze cool, soapy water into the bulb syringe. Squeeze and release it several times.
2. Rinse well using clean water. Squeeze and release it several times.
3. Squeeze again to empty out any water that is left.
4. Let it dry.
5. Clean the dropper the same way.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor if:

- Your baby has a cough or is breathing quickly.
- Your baby has trouble feeding.
- You are concerned about how much your baby is spitting up.
- You have questions or any other concerns.

Call 911 right away if your baby seems to have trouble breathing.

Your checklist

This list helps keep track of what to know about using the bulb suction at home. Talk with your baby's nurse or doctor to learn more.

Before your baby goes home, make sure to know:

- Why and when your baby needs bulb suctioning.
- How to position your baby when suctioning.
- How to wash your hands before and after suctioning.
- What supplies you will need for suctioning.
- How to suction your baby's nose and mouth as needed.
- How to clean the bulb suction.
- How to tell and what to do if your baby is having trouble breathing.
- How to get supplies.

This teaching sheet contains general information only.

Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.