



# WILL STEAM INHALATION OR NASAL RINSES CURE A SARS-CoV-2 INFECTION?

There is no evidence to suggest that steam inhalation and nasal rinses kill viruses in the respiratory tract. In fact, one controlled study found that steam inhalation did not reduce viral load in the nasal passage.

Steam inhalation is often used to provide relief from common symptoms of respiratory illnesses, such as nasal congestion, a runny nose, or cough. Some studies found that this method does help in reducing symptoms, while others found that these symptoms persist even after a steam inhalation. However, symptoms did not worsen in any of these studies. Since nasal rinses or irrigation can give symptomatic relief in case of upper respiratory tract infections such as sinusitis and allergic rhinitis, they are recommended for patients suffering from these symptoms.

One needs to be careful when using either of these methods. Hot water or steam can cause severe burns or scalds if handled without care. Similarly, if the water used for nasal irrigation is hot (instead of warm), or has a high salt concentration, it can cause irritation or discomfort in the nose. If the water or irrigation device is unclean, there is an additional risk of catching infection. Note that these treatments are not listed on the World Health Organisation (WHO) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites for treatment or prevention of COVID-19. This means that even if you are using these methods, it is critical to follow physical distancing, handwashing, and other precautions recommended for protection from COVID-19.

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Notes:

1. This response was first published on the Indian Scientists' Response to CoViD-19 (ISRC) website.
2. Source of the image used in the background of the article title: <https://www.pickpik.com/gray-pressure-cooker-kitchen-cook-pots-cooking-pot-60103>.

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Indian Scientists' Response to CoViD-19 (ISRC) is a group of more than 500 Indian scientists, engineers, technologists, doctors, public health researchers, science communicators, journalists and students who voluntarily came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This group can be contacted at [indscicov@gmail.com](mailto:indscicov@gmail.com).