

Several factors contribute to swallowing problems :

- With age, swallowing muscles often lose strength and coordination. Thus, even normal secretions may not pass smoothly into the stomach.
- During sleep, swallowing occurs much less frequently, and secretions may accumulate. Coughing and vigorous throat clearing are often needed when awakening.

- At any age, nervous tension or stress can trigger throat muscle spasms, resulting in a sensation of a lump in the throat. Frequent throat clearing, which usually produces little or no mucus can make the problem worse by increasing irritation.

- Growths or swelling in the food passages may slow or prevent the passage of liquids and/or solids.

- Swallowing dysfunction may be caused by gastroesophageal reflux, which is a return of stomach contents and acid into the esophagus or into the throat. Heartburn, indigestion, and sore throat are common symptoms which may be aggravated while lying down (especially following eating.) Hiatal hernia, a pouch-like structure at the junction of the esophagus and stomach, often contributes to the reflux.

## Chronic Sore Throat

Post-nasal drip often leads to a sore, irritated throat. Usually throat cultures will

not show strep or other infections, but the tonsils and other glandular tissues in the throat may swell, causing discomfort or a feeling of a throat lump. Successfully treatment of the post nasal drip will usually clear up these throat symptoms.

Before treatment is started, a diagnosis must be made. This requires a detailed ear, nose, and throat exam and possible laboratory endoscopic, and x-ray studies.

Dr. D.S. DEENADAYAL, MS, DLO  
Specialist in Ear, Nose and Throat Diseases &  
Head and Neck Surgery

FOR APPOINTMENTS CALL : 7712700  
Between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Weekdays

### TIMINGS

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*Post - Nasal Drip*

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# Post-Nasal Drip

## What is Post-nasal Drip ?

Post-nasal discharge, also called post-nasal drip (PND), describes the sensation of mucus accumulation in the throat or a feeling that mucus is dripping downward from the back of the nose. PND can be caused by excessive or thick secretions or throat muscle and swallowing disorders.

Normally, the glands lining the nose and sinuses produce one to two quarts of thin mucus a day. On the surface of this mucous membrane lining, the rhythmic beat of invisible cilia (which look like tiny hairs under the microscope) thrust the mucus backward. Then it is swallowed unconsciously. This mucus lubricates and cleanses the nasal membranes, humidifies air, traps and clears inhaled foreign matter, and fights infection. Mucous production and clearance is regulated by a complex interaction of nerves, blood vessels, glands, muscles, hormones, and cilia.

## Abnormal Secretions

Increased thin clear secretions can be due to colds and flu (upper respiratory viruses), allergies, cold temperatures, bright lights, certain foods and spices, pregnancy and hormonal changes, various drugs (including birth control pills

and especially high blood pressure medications) and structural abnormalities such as a deviated or irregular nasal septum. (The septum is the cartilage and bony partition which divides the nose into its two sides, beginning at the nostrils and extending to the back of the nasal cavity).

Vasomotor rhinitis describes a nonallergic "hyperirritable nose", which may feel congested, blocked or wet.

Increased thick secretions are frequently caused by wintertime low humidity in homes and buildings heated without adding moisture to the air. They can also result from sinus or nose infections and some allergies, especially to certain foods such as dairy products. If the secretions of a common cold become thick and green or yellow it is likely that a bacterial sinus infection is developing. Also, particularly in children, they can signify a foreign body in the nose (such as a bean, wadded paper, piece of toy etc.)

Decreased secretions may be caused by any of the following :

- Long-term exposure to environmental irritants (such as cigarette smoke, industrial pollutants, and automobile fumes) which can dry and damage nasal mucous membranes. When secretions are

reduced, they are usually thicker than normal and produce the false sensation of increased mucus.

- Structural abnormalities (such as nasal septal irregularities) which alter air currents may then dry surrounding membranes. (Thus, depending on their type, structural problems can increase or decrease secretions.)

- Age Mucous membranes commonly shrink and dry with age, causing reduced mucus that is thicker than normal which the elderly perceive as PND.

- Other less common disorders of the tissues lining the nose and sinuses can alter mucous production or flow.

## Swallowing Problems

Swallowing is a complicated process by which food and fluid go from the mouth into the esophagus (tube connecting the throat to the stomach). It requires coordinated-nerve and muscle interaction in the mouth, throat, and esophagus. Swallowing problems may result in accumulation of solids or liquids in the throat, which can spill into the voice box (larynx) and breathing passages (trachea and bronchii) causing hoarseness, throat clearing, or cough.