

Steam Inhalation



<https://www.top10homeremedies.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/steam-inhalation.jpg>

What is steam inhalation?

As the name suggests, it is simply breathing in steam from heated water. Many people do this to soothe and open their nasal passages when they have a cold or sinus infection. The warm, moist air is thought to loosen mucus and relieve symptoms.

Why should I use steam inhalation?

We know that dehydration has a negative impact on your voice.

There is some evidence to suggest that drinking plenty of fluids will improve how the vocal cords work and how your voice sounds. There is also some evidence that steam inhalation is can also be helpful.

It is thought that steam inhalation (or “steaming”) can be particularly helpful when:

- Your voice feels tired, sore or hoarse
- Your throat feels dry
- You have an irritating persistent cough or thick mucus
- You have been out in a noisy/dry/smoky environment
- You have used your voice heavily

Many people find steaming soothing, particularly before bed.

How do I steam?

You can buy an inexpensive (under £10) steam-inhaling mug from most large chemists. They are also easy to buy online. This allows you to watch TV/read while you inhale. Many people find this is the most relaxing way to steam. An alternative is sitting over a basin of just-boiled water with a towel over your head. Some people like this but others find it claustrophobic, hot and a little boring.

Allow the steam to enter your nose and mouth by breathing normally through your nose and mouth. Do this for 10-15 minutes. You will need to top up with just-boiled water 2-3 times as it will cool and lose the steam.

Use ordinary water, just-boiled from the kettle. You do not need to add anything to it.

Some people choose to buy an electrical steam inhaler. These pump out a steady stream of temperature-controlled water vapour.

When should I steam?

We typically suggest steaming once or twice a day for 10-15 minutes. It is best to do it at times when you are most aware of your symptoms e.g. dry throat or have been in a dry environment/used your voice more heavily.

Warnings:

- Be very careful handling just-boiled water. The steam coming from water when it boils can scald so give it a minute or so before using the water.
- Do not steam if you have been diagnosed with heart failure – this is contraindicated.

This information has been adapted from a leaflet produced by West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, with their permission.

NOTES: