

SETTING

Community Pharmacy

PATIENT

You are speaking to the pharmacist and request another bottle of a nasal decongestant to treat your blocked nose. You've recently had a cold that caused the blocked nose and have been using a decongestant nasal spray for around two weeks. At first the nasal spray helped but now it almost seems as though the congestion is worse.

TASK

- Ask the pharmacist for another bottle of nasal decongestant.
- Be persistent. You want to keep using it because at first it gave you good relief and the blocked nose is really troubling you. Insist on explanations for why the spray is no longer working.
- Be reluctant to try any other suggestions. Question how a saline spray suggested by the pharmacist could be of any use to you.
- Be sceptical, but finally agree to try the saline spray.
- Ask the pharmacist what happens if this option doesn't work.

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PHARMACIST

The patient in the pharmacy is requesting another bottle of a nasal decongestant to treat his/her blocked nose, the result of a recent cold. He/she has been using the nasal spray for around two weeks and feels that the blocked nose isn't getting better. You believe this person may be experiencing rebound congestion because he/she has used the nasal spray for more than a few days in a row.

TASK

- Explain to the patient why the blocked nose may not be getting any better (prolonged use of the spray irritates the mucous lining of the nose; causes vasodilation of the arterioles, that is, widening of the small blood vessels).
- Convince the patient that the nasal spray is not the best option. Explain that the rebound congestion will persist while the spray is used.
- Find out what the patient knows about saline spray.
- Explain the advantages: saline spray is a substitute for the decongestant; can help nasal mucosa to recover, break habit of using decongestant.
- Advise the patient to return if the problem persists to discuss options (e.g., further medical advice).