

To Your Health

Sinus Misery

The 'Massanutten' Invention to Better Nasal Health

Q. Did you know that we have a lady living in Massanutten Village that has created a sinus rinse pot? You should talk to her!

- Charlie at Massanutten

One of the things I love about writing this column is that I have learning opportunities such as this. After I received both a call and an email from Charlie, I sat down and talked with Isabella Jones A.K.A. Betti Brubaker and her assistant Kara French and got an earful—or should I say a noseful!

Isabella teaches yoga at Massanutten and one of the many benefits of this art is free breathing. Isabella started her yoga career at the ripe old age of nineteen and has been practicing and teaching for 36 years. Her first teacher introduced her to the benefits of a netti pot for sinus irrigation and it became as commonplace as brushing her teeth. When she became a mother of two sons, she taught them to “netti” when they brushed their teeth. However, she ran into a problem a couple of years ago when

her elderly parents moved into the area so she could watch out for them. She wanted them to use a netti pot for sinus issues and allergies, but her mother refused to “put that thing in my nose.” Out of necessity

and inspiration, Isabella designed a netti pot which she felt was easier to hold and use than the original style. With her nickname Betti in mind, She dubbed it the “Betti Pot” and after much research, found an American artisan to produce it in fine bone china. Keep in mind that most, if not all, of the netti pots currently on the market are made of common ceramic, outside of the USA and cost a fraction of what the Betti Pot costs to produce. And I have to say, not only does it work really great, but it also looks great sitting on my bathroom sink.

But let's get back to the reasons for the netti/Betti pot. Betti says that using forceful nasal irrigation products or tools such as the NeilMed Sinus Rinse squeeze bottle that I told you about last month is

“too forceful for the delicate sinus membranes.” She went on to explain how the gentle method of rinsing the sinus cavities with a pot does not put added pressure on the sinuses, but does thoroughly clean and open them for better breathing. She also explained why her pot design is easier for little ones and the elderly to use. While the pots are similar, the Betti Pot actually looks more like a miniature tea pot than the netti pot and this, Betti says, is what makes it easier to use. “With the regular netti pot design, the water sometimes spills into the face. With my design, you tilt the head to the side slightly and the higher sides and taller spout keep the water contained until the pot is empty. Also, the sides have an indentation which makes it easier for little hands and arthritic hands to hold it.”

Okay, I listened to Betti (and Charlie) and I did a little more research and from Wikipedia online encyclopedia comes this: “A pulsating nasal irrigation device utilizes a piston powered pump assembly that delivers a controlled yet intermittent pulsating flow with pressure control that may be adjusted for individual comfort. Medical reports support that positive pressure irrigation retains a larger volume of solution and irrigates the sinuses more consistently than other methods” (such as netti pots, bulb syringes, and squeeze bottles). You decide which you would like running through your sinuses!

One of my standard pieces of advice is that you do your own research. Talk to Betti/Isabella. Talk to your doctor.

Get online and gather much information. Regardless of how you irrigate your nasal passages, the message is just do it. If you're worried about damaging the delicate tissues, follow Betti's advice and use her pot for a gentle rinsing.

There are many benefits to sinus irrigation, regardless of the device you use. Indoors, heating/cooling can dry our sinuses out which makes us more susceptible to sinus infections because the natural helpful mucous that traps pollutants and moves them out of our sinuses is not moist enough to do its job. Rinsing the sinuses soothes dry nasal passages so they can do their job. On the other hand, if you have too much mucous developing, rinsing will remove the excess naturally. Using a netti pot also washes away dust, pollen and

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many other environmental irritants. Betti quoted a Dr. Oz interview saying that bacteria and fungus from the sinus is migrating to the brain and is a very serious problem--just one more good reason to rinse your sinuses.

Rinsing your sinuses first thing in the morning may be enough for some folks. However, others may feel better with a morning and evening rinse, especially if you work in irritants. Still others may feel the need to rinse up to four times a day, especially if your sinuses are irritated or you have a sinus infection.

Regardless of the method you use, rinsing with saline rinse does improve sinus health easily and efficiently. Betti recommends using 1/4 teaspoon of sea salt dissolved in warm water in her Betti Pot.

And remember, if you already have a sinus infection and think you must take an antibiotic, you might want to take into consideration a new study that found they work no better on a sinus infection than a placebo, plus they increase your resistance to future needed medicine.

If you want to talk with Betti/Isabella, you can reach her or Kara at 1-888-80Betti or you can go online to bettipot.com or kara@resortyoga.com The high fire porcelain Betti Pot retails for \$23.95. However, Betti sells it to Massanutten folks for \$20. Betti says that eventually you will be able to buy it in Harrisonburg at Kate's Natural Products and that they can ship it anywhere.

I overlooked the Betti Pot last month and I want to thank Charlie for bringing

it to my attention. I pass Betti at Massanutten every week as she leaves her yoga class and I begin my tai chi/qigong class but we never have time to talk. I noticed her colorful little pots the last couple of months but didn't know the great story behind them. I am committed to supporting local people in their efforts, but this time I didn't see the forest for the trees! In correcting my "oops," I also got to know Betti and Kara better, I got a Betti Pot and I reinforced my theory of "it's never just one thing!" Life is good.

Note: The information in Wholistically Speaking is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, I highly recommend you consult a competent practitioner and educate yourself before embarking on any course of treatment.

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