

Augusta University launches study to test nasal irrigation for COVID-19

Researchers at Augusta University launch study to determine if nasal irrigation can reduce the severity of symptoms in patients with the coronavirus.

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, October 12, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to spike across the nation, researchers at Augusta University have launched a study to determine if nasal

irrigation can reduce the severity of symptoms in patients with the coronavirus. Patients over 55 years old who receive a positive COVID-19 test result from Augusta University's drive-thru specimen collection site at [Annex II at 524 15th Street](#) may be contacted to participate in the study.



Image of Dr. Baxter with nasal irrigation tools.

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In SE Asia, 80% of the population performs nasal irrigation as a form of hygiene, like teeth brushing. Countries like Thailand & Laos have many fewer cases than nearby countries without this practice.”

Amy Baxter M.D., pediatric emergency physician and CEO of Pain Care Labs

The severity of COVID-19 has been correlated with the initial number of nasal viral particles, and with the amount of virus present in the nose in hospitalized patients. Recent research indicates that the differing burden of severe disease may be explained by the behavior of nasal ACE2 receptors. This study will see if flushing the viral particles out of the nose after a positive test can reduce the chance of patients becoming severely ill.

The practice of flushing the nasal passages with boiled or distilled water and a surgical antimicrobial has long been recommended by ear, nose, and throat surgeons as a way to reduce sinus infections. Moreover, in countries where

nasal rinsing, or lavage, is practiced routinely as a part of hygiene, COVID-19 case and fatality rates are lower.

"Several groups are studying nasal irrigation to prevent illness," noted Dr. Amy Baxter, the lead

investigator on this project and a clinical associate professor in the [Department of Emergency Medicine](#) at Augusta University. "If a vaccine is not 100% effective, even though we have treatments to lower the fatality rate, the lives of high-risk groups are impacted if they are afraid to catch the disease. If we prove we can prevent hospitalization of older patients and minorities, their lives can get back to normal too."

Patients will receive a device to perform nasal irrigation, one of two additives that make the nasal irrigation slightly more alkaline or more acidic, and will be encouraged to do nasal irrigation twice a day for two weeks. They will give feedback for two more weeks on symptoms and any visits to the hospitals.

This study is being carried out by faculty and staff in the Department of Emergency Medicine at Augusta University. Dr. Baxter is funded by the NIH National Institute of Drug Abuse for mechanical stimulation pain relief research. The department is grateful for donations and supplies from The Bernard and Anne Gray Donor Advised Fund; RhinoSystems, Inc.; NeilMed Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; and [Pain Care Labs](#), a d/b/a of MMJ Labs which have helped to make the study possible.

Danielle Harris
Augusta University
+1 706-522-3023

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Dr. Amy Baxter, Medical Doctor and Pain Researcher



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