

# All Stuffed Up?

## Clear Up Sinus Problems the Natural Way



If you suffer from chronic sinus problems, you're not alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about 30 million people or 13% of adults have been diagnosed with sinusitis. The U.S. National Center for Health Statistics reports that sinus and allergy problems combined are the number one chronic health complaint across the country and have been for two decades. When you combine upper respiratory allergies with chronic sinusitis, sixty million people (about a quarter of the population) have sinus problems.

Medical treatment for sinusitis (inflammation of the sinuses) usually involves antibiotics. Researchers in a recent study from the University of Nebraska found that over 80% of patients with acute sinus infections and nearly 70% of patients with chronic sinus problems were prescribed antibiotics. Unfortunately, the majority of acute sinus problems are viral. Antibiotics only work on bacterial infections.

Furthermore, one study determined that chronic sinus problems are primarily due to inflammation, not infection. Chronic inflammation of the sinuses simply makes them more prone to infection. Therefore, the long-term solution is to mediate the immune response and reduce the inflammation.

The other common treatment for chronic sinus problems is antihistamines. These provide symptomatic relief, but do nothing to actually cure the condition. So, the bottom line is that modern medicine has no real cure for chronic sinus problems. This is why people with chronic sinus problems may be told by their doctor to "just live with it."

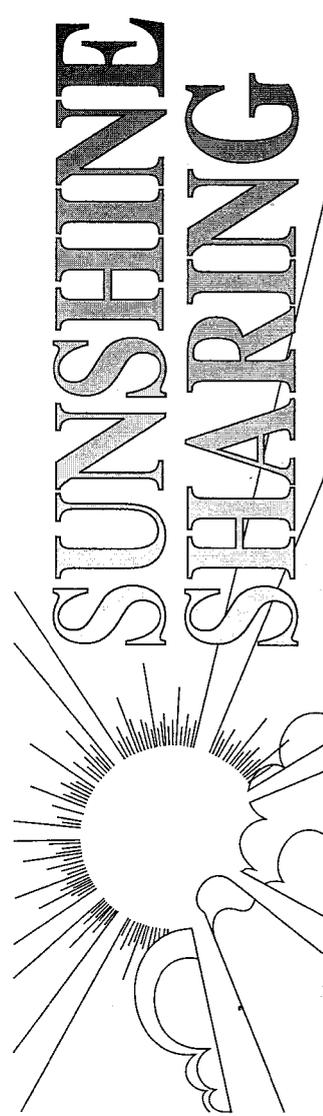
### Natural Remedies to the Rescue

Thankfully, there are options. A number of natural approaches and remedies have enabled many people to actually recover from their sinus problems permanently.

For starters, there is a big connection between the health of the mucus membranes of the gastrointestinal system and the health of the respiratory system. This is why the real answer to sinus problems is typically found by healing the intestines. Both sinusitis and respiratory allergies are linked to poor diet and poor digestive health.

In this month's Sunshine Sharing, we'll explain the gut-sinus connection and discuss how digestive enzymes, probiotics, colon cleansing, nasal irrigation and decongestants can get rid of chronic sinus problems. We'll even address emotional factors that may be contributing to the problem. These remedies will often offer immediate relief as well as a long-term cure. The bottom line is that you don't have to just live with a stuffed up head. You can clear your sinus congestion safely and permanently.

**Look inside to learn how to get unstuffed and breathe freely again...**



#### Important Notice

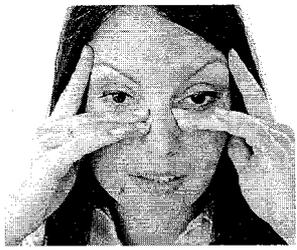
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# Natural Ways to Clear Your Head



To understand how you can resolve sinus problems, you first need to understand why the sinuses get stuffed up in the first place. Here's what happens.

The mucus membranes lining the sinuses, lungs and gastrointestinal tract are a protective barrier, part of the body's innate immune system. They form what we might think of as an internal "skin" or protective layer. As their name implies, these membranes secrete a thin fluid called mucus, which is composed primarily of water with a protein matrix. Mucus protects these membranes and allows them to flush away particulate matter like dust, smoke and pollen, as well as microbes.

The membranes of the sinuses (and lungs) are coated with tiny hair-like projections called cilia. The cilia are constantly sweeping this mucus (and the substances it has trapped) to the throat where it can be swallowed and eliminated.

When someone gets a cold or other viral infection, mucus production is increased to flush these irritants out of the body. This excess mucus production results in a runny nose, sneezing, post nasal drip and/or coughing. At the same time, white blood cells called macrophages, which live in the membranes, become more active and trigger an inflammatory process that causes swelling of the tissues. This swelling can make breathing difficult because it narrows the respiratory passages.

In acute sinusitis (inflammation of the sinuses), the body's immune system is typically able to destroy the offending viruses (or bacteria) and conditions rapidly return to normal. However, sometimes these symptoms of congestion and inflammation last for weeks, months or even years. When the sinuses are congested for more than four weeks, a person is said to have chronic sinusitis.

## What Causes Chronic Sinusitis?

Most people assume that their sinus problems are caused by an infection or allergic reaction to something like pollen. However, any type of irritation to the sinuses can initiate an inflammatory response, such as exposure to chemicals and air pollution. Furthermore, there is a major connection between the health of the mucous membranes of the respiratory system and those of the gastrointestinal system.

Perhaps you've noticed that if you eat something that doesn't agree with you, your sinuses may start to run shortly thereafter. Also, it's not uncommon for people who are experiencing upper respiratory allergic reactions to have gas and digestive upset at the same time. This is due to the close relationship between the respiratory tract and the colon—and the immune functions they share. Healing the digestive tract is often the answer to healing the sinuses. If more people and their doctors understood this, many of their sinus problems would be resolved.

## Food Allergies and Digestive Problems

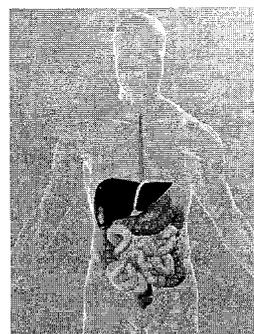
Allergic reactions in the intestines sensitize respiratory membranes, causing them to hyper-secrete mucus. This can result in chronic sinus problems. The most common foods that contribute to chronic sinus problems are dairy products and gluten-bearing grains (e.g. wheat, rye, barley). Eliminating these allergy-causing foods starts clearing up many people's sinus problems automatically. Try fasting for a few days. If your sinus problem clear up while fasting, food allergies are probably a contributing factor.

It also helps to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and get more fiber in the diet. Eating organically grown fruits, vegetables, legumes, gluten-free grains, modest amounts of fermented dairy products like yoghurt and kefir, free-range organic chicken and grass-fed organic beef provides balanced nutrition and promotes healthy digestion, while minimizing the potential for allergic reactions and inflammation.

One doesn't need to have food allergies to have digestive issues triggering sinus problems. Many people have chronically poor digestion, which means food isn't broken down properly. This causes stagnation in the digestive tract and creates congestion in the lymphatic system. The result is a similar congestion in the sinuses.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, this congestion of fluids is referred to as "damp accumulation." This dampness becomes a breeding ground for mold, yeast and other invading pathogens. One way to tell if you're suffering from this "dampness" in your system is to look at your tongue. If you have a thick coating (white or yellowish) on the surface of your tongue, your system is congested.

## Improving Digestive Health



Enzymes help to break down food and reduce congestion, so people suffering from sinus problems should consider taking an enzyme supplement like **Proactazyme** or **Food Enzymes**. Proteolytic enzymes (proteases such as bromelain from pineapples) can also be directly helpful in thinning mucus by breaking down its protein base. This makes the mucus more watery and easier to expel. So, taking Food Enzymes or **High Potency Protease** between meals with lots of water can be helpful in breaking up thick mucus that is difficult to expel.

A good colon cleanse can also be very helpful in reducing chronic sinus congestion. Many people have found rapid relief from sinus congestion after doing a colon cleanse. Try taking one or two boxes of **CleanStart** or the **Tiao He Cleanse**. Make sure to drink plenty of water while doing a cleanse. After the

cleanses, make sure that you continue to keep the colon clean by taking a fiber supplement like **Nature's Three** or **Psyllium Hulls Combination** regularly. It is also helpful to re-establish gut flora after a cleanse by taking probiotics like **Probiotic Eleven** or **Bifidophilus Flora Force**.

It's also important to take probiotics after taking antibiotics. In fact, if you've taken antibiotics for sinus problems, you should definitely take probiotics for six to twelve months. Several years ago, the Mayo Clinic cultured the sinus cavity of individuals with sinusitis and chronic sinus infections and found that 96% of them had fungal infections rather than bacterial infections. So you may also want to do the **Candida Clear** cleanse.

## Lending Your Cilia a Helping Hand

As we've explained, the cilia or "hairs" which line the mucous membrane in your sinuses constantly sweep mucus and debris out of your airways. Unfortunately, they can atrophy or become functionally impaired through chronic infection, dehydration, chemical damage and other factors.

According to Dr. Murray Grossan, a Los Angeles-based internist and author, "The treatment of choice for sinus disease is to help the body return the cilia to their normal function, beating 16 times per second. When the cilia are normal, people do not have sinusitis; they don't even have sinus-related allergies."

To test the functioning of your cilia, place a grain of saccharin in your nose, then time how long it takes the particle to travel from the front of the nose to the back. If you taste the sugar within five minutes, your cilia are functioning normally. If it takes thirty minutes, your cilia are not functioning properly.

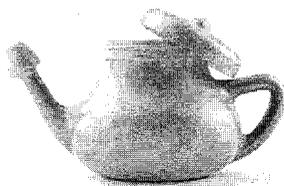
If your cilia have atrophied, you will need to drink lots of water and irrigate your sinuses on a regular basis to help clean them out. Regular exercise is also helpful, as it increases lymph and fluid flow.

## Nasal Irrigation

Nasal irrigation is a procedure one can perform at home and involves using a saltwater rinse to clear the nasal passages. It flushes out trapped mucus, particulate matter and microbes. Over time, it can help to heal the sinuses and restore the normal functioning of cilia. A popular way to do this is to use a bulb syringe or a ceramic neti pot (available from many health food stores). Fill the pot or syringe with a solution of pure, room temperature water mixed with a natural salt. Use 1/2 teaspoon of salt to eight ounces of water.

To perform the nasal irrigation, place your head downward over the sink. Tilt your head to the side and use the neti pot or syringe to place the solution into the top nasal passage. It will flow out the lower nasal passage.

To destroy pathogens in the sinuses, one can use 1/2 teaspoon **Silver Shield** to replace the salt in the irrigation water.



**Silver Shield** can also be sprayed directly into the sinuses. It will destroy viruses, bacteria and yeast.

Another popular way to help clear out the sinuses is to inhale steam. Bring a pot of water to a boil on the stove and use a towel to direct some of the warm steam towards your face. Inhale the steam (making sure to stay far enough away from the pot so that the steam won't burn you). Adding some essential oils to the water, such as eucalyptus or pine, makes this therapy even more effective.

## Breaking up Congestion

There are many herbal remedies that are helpful in breaking up congestion in the sinuses and helping them to drain. Be aware that these remedies are NOT antihistamines, so they won't dry out nasal secretions. Instead, they break up the congestion, loosen the mucus and help the sinuses to drain properly.

**Fenugreek and Thyme** is a traditional herbal formula that relieves sinus pressure, including sinus headaches, and aids drainage. Another option is **Sinus Support**, which tends to be a more slow-acting formula that works on some of the underlying causes of sinus congestion.

**ALJ** is a very popular herbal formula that clears congestion from both the sinuses and lungs. It has the added benefit of helping to improve digestion, thus helping to heal the mucus membranes of both the respiratory passages and the gastrointestinal tract.

If the mucus is discolored (yellowish or greenish in color), then it is likely there is an active infection present. Two good remedies that can help in this case are **Goldenseal and Echinacea** and **High Potency Garlic**.

When nasal polyps are an issue, or the sinus congestion has been an issue for many years, a useful therapy is making an herbal snuff to clear the sinuses, shrink the polyps and reduce swelling. It also fights infection and aids healing of the sinus tissues. Mix equal parts **bayberry** rootbark and **goldenseal** powder by emptying the contents of a couple of capsules. Snuff a pinch of this mixture into the sinuses once or twice a day. Although it can be somewhat irritating at first, this therapy often causes

**Continued on page 4**

## Additional Help and Information

For more help in finding natural remedies for chronic sinusitis and sinus problems, contact the person who gave you this newsletter. Their information should be found at the top of this page. You can also consult the following sources:

*Sinus Survival* by Robert S. Ivker, D.O.

*Coming Clean: Your Guide to Detoxification* by Steven Horne

*The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products* by Tree of Light Publishing.





## Unstuff Your Head

Sinus problems are the number one chronic health problem in America. Unfortunately, the antibiotics and antihistamines commonly used to treat this problem offer only symptomatic relief. Natural remedies, on the other hand, can permanently resolve chronic sinus problems.

**Discover natural remedies for chronic sinus problems inside.**

*Continued from Page Three*

copious drainage, clearing the sinuses. This mixture can also be made into a tea and used as a nasal irrigation.

### **The Emotional Factor**

Many people are surprised to learn that sinusitis and other respiratory problems can be connected to unresolved emotional issues. In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the lungs and the colon are considered part of the metal element, which defends the body. This makes sense, considering that the mucus membrane linings of the respiratory and digestive system are a primary line of immune defense.

TCM wisdom says that grief can damage the metal element and many people find there is a link between chronic respiratory problems and unresolved grief. A stuffed up head can be

related to an inability to grieve or cry. Post nasal drip may be thought of as internal tears or suppressed grief. So, consider the possibility that grief and sadness may be a factor in chronic sinus problems. The flower essence blend **Release It**, can be used to aid the grieving process, or, if it is deeply buried, the **Open Heart flower** essence may be beneficial.

### **Purifying the Air**

One final tip for chronic sinus problems is to purify the air in your living environment. This is particularly helpful if you live in an area prone to dampness and mold. The **Boomerang Air Sanitizer** sanitizes the air by neutralizing and killing airborne pathogens. It also helps to knock airborne allergens out of the air, such as dust and pollen. One can also diffuse essential oils like eucalyptus or pine into the air.