

## Preventing Sinusitis

Colds, flu, and allergies can lead more easily to sinusitis. Do your best to prevent sinusitis by preventing these underlying problems. Do what you can to avoid getting colds and other infections. Avoid any allergens (substances that cause allergies), and keep your sinuses as moist as possible.

### Tips for Air Travel

When traveling on an airplane, use saline nasal spray to keep your sinuses moist. Drink plenty of fluids. You may also want to take a decongestant before boarding.

### Prevent Colds

Do what you can to avoid exposure to colds and flu. Whenever possible, take more time to rest when you feel something "coming on."



- Wash your hands frequently, especially during cold and flu season.
- As much as possible, stay away from infected people.
- Follow these standbys for beating the "bugs": eat balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.

### Avoid Allergens

First, find out what substances you're allergic to. Then, take steps to minimize exposure to allergens or irritants in the air such as dust, pollution, and pollen.

- Wear a mask when you clean, or consider hiring a housecleaner to help minimize your exposure to dust.
- Sit in the nonsmoking sections of restaurants.
- Avoid the outdoors during peak pollution hours such as rush hour.
- Keep an air conditioner on during allergy season and clean its filter regularly.

## **Maximize Moisture**

Keeping your sinuses moist makes your mucus thinner, allowing your sinuses to drain better. This, in turn, helps prevent infection. Ask your doctor about these suggestions:

- Use a humidifier, regularly cleaning out any mold or mildew in the reservoir.
- Drink several glasses of water a day.
- Avoid drying substances such as alcohol and coffee.
- Avoid smoke, which dries out sinus linings.
- If you've had surgery and get a cold, use saltwater rinses until the cold ends.

**Date Last Reviewed:** 2/5/2004  
**Date Last Modified:** 2/5/2004