



Winter Indoors Can Be A Real Pain In The Sinuses

(NAPSA)—If you have sinusitis, you have lots of company. Many people suffer from it, particularly those who live in a moist climate, which provides a fertile breeding ground for bacteria.

Sinusitis starts with a trigger that may be different for each person. It could be allergies, a cold, cigarette smoke or even pollution. Normally, your sinuses drain a thin mucus that is swallowed without you even noticing it. But when you're exposed to that particular trigger, the sinuses close up, the mucus is trapped and bacteria grow.

Many people are more susceptible to sinus problems during colder weather because their environment changes. They spend more time indoors breathing dry air and travel on planes with recirculated air, both of which can cause nasal passages to become dry and prone to infection. People also come in close contact with others at parties and family gatherings, sharing germs that may evolve into colds and eventually develop into sinus infections.

While you can't always prevent a sinus infection, you can minimize your chances of developing one.

- Use a humidifier at home, especially in the bedroom.
- If you're allergic to fungus, avoid damp basements.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid tobacco smoke.
- Maintain a healthful diet and stay active.
- If you have diabetes, keep your blood sugar under control.
- If you develop symptoms despite your best efforts, it may be a sinus infection or it could be something else.

Doctors report that a sinus infection can often be mistaken for a cold or allergy attack, so you have to look carefully at your



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symptoms. After five to seven days, most colds should be gone or have improved. If cold symptoms persist, you may have a sinus infection. Also, if you have allergy symptoms that continue even when you're not around common allergic triggers, such as pets or pollen, you may have sinusitis.

Doctors diagnose a sinus infection if a patient has at least two major symptoms or one major and one minor symptom. Major symptoms include facial pain and pressure, nasal blockage, runny nose or a decreased sense of smell. Minor symptoms may be fever, bad breath, fatigue, dental pain and ear pain or pressure.

Sinus infections can be treated with medications, such as antibiotics, nasal steroids, anti-fungal medicines, and mucus thinners. Many doctors suggest you remove impurities in the nose by using an over-the-counter saline nose spray. Two sprays in each nostril about four times a day is usually sufficient. Ayr Saline Nasal Mist, for example, helps loosen and thin secretions to aid in the removal of mucus from the nose and sinuses.