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Chronic Sinusitis

Chronic sinusitis is a common problem in Southern California, due to high levels of air pollution. This disease process can be aggravated by chemical exposures from indoor cleaning products, especially chlorine bleach and chlorine based window cleaners and bathroom products. Use white vinegar and baking soda for cleaning instead. Indoor potted plants can be a source of mold exposure which can severely worsen sinusitis and respiratory allergies. Remove all potted plants from the home. Air travel causes dehydration and exposure to jet fuel can also inflame the sinuses and weaken immunity. Bring one liter of water on plane flights, and use the sinus rinse procedure outlined below every two hours on long flights.

Automobile ventilation systems can be contaminated with mold and bacteria due to condensation from the air conditioner. If you smell a musty or mildew odor coming from your car, have the system cleaned with a deodorizing foam injected through the air vents.

Pillows may be contaminated with bacteria and mold due to moisture from breathing. Change pillows to hypoallergenic dacron polyester fiberfill, no down, feathers, or foam, as these can trigger allergic reactions, outgas toxic chemicals, and grow bacteria and fungi.

Daily flushing of the sinuses can help to clear current infections, and prevent new ones. This is especially important during air travel, Santa Ana wind conditions, and after exposure to mold from gardening or contaminated buildings. When cleaning dusty areas, or working in the garden, a protective mask should be worn.

Sinus rinse: before herbs and meals, use an over the counter saline nasal spray (Ocean, Sea Breeze, Xlear) 2 to 3 sprays up each nostril followed by blowing/spitting, if yellow or green color is present, repeat until mucus is clear.

Sinus steam and flush: make a tea with one half spoon of herbs to one half cup of hot water, do a steam inhalation with a towel draped over your head, when the tea cools to room temperature, pour a small amount of the tea into the palm of your hand and sniff it up your nose, spitting out any drainage that runs down the back of your throat, and blowing your nose into a tissue. If there is any color to the mucus, repeat the sniff/spit/blow process until the mucus is clear. By steaming and flushing your sinuses with the herbal tea infected mucus is prevented from draining into the digestive system.