



What To Do When You Have Sinus Pain

By Allison Ishman

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For those troubled by sinus pain, the process of relief can be an aggravating one. In this article, I intend to offer a more complete approach to managing sinus pain so that you may enjoy life without sinus pain.

Drink lots and lots of [water](#). Without water in your bloodstream and lymph system, your sinuses cannot drain. Without drainage, all you have is the uncomfortable sinus pain and pressure that distracts you from your daily life. So, first and foremost you need to go drink about 16 ounces ...right away. Recommended daily water intake that is generally agreed upon by health and fitness professionals is about half your body weight in ounces. That means that if you weigh 150 pounds, you need 75 ounces of water each day. Tap water, bottled water, sparkling water, Perrier, Pellegrino, water with cucumber, lemon or melon are all good. I particularly encourage the use of lemon in water as it sometimes helps boost lymph drainage. Which brings me to...

No sugars or simple carbs, careful with the dairy, and get egg whites?! Simple carbohydrates and any form of sugar will spike your blood sugar and be much harder on your lymphatics. In order to reduce load on the lymph system, you want to keep your blood sugar relatively even throughout the day – and especially late at night and early in the morning. Eating throughout the day on a 5-meal a day plan is recommended, even if two meals are simple snacks such as nuts, vegetables, or string cheese.

Carbohydrate foods to avoid include white bread or potatoes, most fruits, ice cream, sweets, and pastas. Wheat versions of foods is always preferred to white versions. Those of you out there with wheat sensitivities will find that even wheat products make your sinuses hurt, so you may need to avoid what altogether. Some people are more sensitive to carbohydrates when it comes to sinuses, and others are more sensitive to fruits and sugars.

In eastern healthcare systems, sugars are hard on your Spleen and Stomach meridians. These two meridians are responsible for your immune system and are very strongly affected by what you eat. Stomach meridian controls sinus. When you eliminate sugars, your body can keep up with it's Spleen and Stomach meridian activities without having to regulate your immune response to your foods. Spleen meridian is responsible for regulating energy and blood sugar for the rest of the body.

Some people are especially sensitive to dairy. In traditional Chinese medicine, dairy is also considered a “damp” food, which is also hard on Spleen and Stomach meridians.

This brings me to the do, rather than just the don'ts. I strongly recommend a poached or a boiled egg in the morning to clean out your sinuses. This loose protein chain is changed chemically when an egg is beaten or cooked. An unbroken protein chain found in boiled or poached eggs is quickly and easily absorbed by your lymphatic system, and is impressively useful in cleaning out sinuses. Try it. Even if you don't enjoy a boiled egg as a food – think of it as medicine. The yolk is optional and not necessary if you want to cut your fat intake.

Go easy on the alcohol. For the same reason you're avoiding sugars, you want to avoid all alcohol, which breaks down VERY quickly into sugars in the body.

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Try eating all cooked and no spicy food. As opposed to eating raw food that is harder for your stomach to break down, eating cooked food allows your earth element to get stronger. Usually this will help you feel less tired and allow you to have more energy as well.

Use Aromatherapy. Lavender smells great, and is a good help if any air at all is making it into your nose. You may also want to try eucalyptus or peppermint. These often help with sinus clogging and runniness. If you have a bottle of flower essences, you can just put a dab under your nose, and carry that bottle with you in a purse or pocket.

Use Vibration! In addition to heat, the lymph system responds really well to vibration. Major hubs for your lymph system are in your armpits and the inguinal area, which is the crease between your lower abdomen and your leg. I prefer using the [Body Relaxer](#), but any vibrational massager will help. The Body Relaxer is a smooth, flat surface and doesn't get too pokey around these sensitive areas. It's also adjustable for intensity of vibration and can even be used on your head, which drains sinuses incredibly well. Also try the vibration around your neck and shoulders.

Self massage for sinuses. To massage gently for sinus drainage, roll the skin on your cheeks. Then you can use the fingertips to glide consistently over your eyebrows from the inside of the brow to the outside, following the hair growth. Do the same motion lightly on the bone just under each eye, from the nose to the outside of your eye. Repeat 10 times.

LIGHT pressure points.

1. **Eyes** - You can press that place at the top of your nose by your eye socket where pressure collects.
2. **Neck** - To reach the tight muscles at the base of your skull, sit on a high-backed chair and GENTLY press against the chair so your neck feels relief. You can roll your head back and forth gently to work the attachments of tight muscles there.
3. **Hand** - The reflexology points are the webs of your fingers and your toes – so massage them gently to work out the tenderness.
4. **Chest** - Also, press GENTLY under the middle of each collarbone, and use this point to release Stomach meridian that governs sinuses if it's sore. Consider [getting a lymphatic drainage massage](#) and have a skilled therapist relieve these places.

Ahh...The ease of heat. Since the main goal here is to increase lymph circulation to relieve the sinus pressure, using heat in some way is especially helpful. Your options include moist heat packs, baths, showers, and hot tubs. I'm not fond of steam, as some people can't tolerate it well with sinus pressure. I love these practical [neck packs](#) for increasing circulation and sinus drainage. You may also appreciate using a moist heat pack for eyes/sinus. You can try getting into a bathtub of hot water, a spa, a hot tub, or into a shower and immerse your head and sinuses (without suffocating yourself). Some find that using dead sea salts helps act as a saline solution and cleans out sinuses well. Dead sea salts are well known for reducing stress and tension as well. Finally, you can use a [vascular flush](#) effectively as well. Try alternating hot with a cold splash from time to time, to get those fluids in your system to flush out. The alternation of hot and cold offers a temperature pump and hydrates you if you're stuffy and dehydrated. It also cleans away dust or pollens that may be aggravating you.

Stretch your neck, arms and chest. The muscles in your chest, upper arms (both biceps and triceps – think balance) and forearm affect your neck. The connective tissues that wrap your muscles are called

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fascia. The fascia is like a rubber band that is spread widely and wraps your limbs and body. The fascia in arms, chest and neck can really tighten down and reduce the lymph flow need to drain those sinuses!

Stretch your calves and hip flexors. Do deep lunges. I know it sounds nutty, but the truth of the matter is that there are structural reasons why your hips – linked to rib, chest, and shoulders – affect whether or not your neck and shoulders will relax. I call these "fascial links". You can call them whatever you like...just stretch your groin, your butt, your legs, and make sure those fascial links aren't referring tension up to your head and sinuses.

Avoid Echinacea and Goldenseal supplements if you're allergic to ragweeds. Echinacea and Goldenseal are ragweeds.

Use a cervical roll – a small pillow roll – and rest your neck a bit. We all use our heads all day, and sometimes the weight of holding up our heads and focusing on driving, computers, phones, and conversations of speeches give us muscles used to tension. Relax that neck on a pillow that puts your neck in a neutral position...ahh, relief.

Antioxidants. A neurologist recently told me...in person...that the Journal of the American Medical Association has published over 2,000 articles documenting the effectiveness of antioxidants in tissue healing. Be sure you're not skipping this very important piece of the wellness / I-don't-have-sinus-pain-anymore puzzle. The quality of your antioxidants does matter. If you don't have fresh, good quality vitamins, you may be missing the boat on this one. If you can't figure this out or can't find any, let me know. I have fantastic ones in my office.

Stress – stomp on it. If you're tolerating a lot of stress – relationships, work, family, scheduling – whatever the cause – you need to dump it. Do some breathing, exercise, and find out about the stress reduction methods that work for you. You may have to actually deal with a problem you're been avoiding.

Sometimes physical pain is caused by life stresses that are irksome and become downright annoying. So, un-annoy yourself. It sounds simple - it is. It just required a little planning. For more information on this, see my article titled: [Self-Care in the Information Age](#). Or email me ishman1@ibodycare.com.

Strengthen your "safety muscles". These are the muscles below your shoulder that dissipate some of the strength imbalances that keep your neck and shoulders tight. If your neck and shoulders are tense, the muscles will not allow all of those handy little lymph nodes to drain...and you are left with uncomfortable, clogged sinuses. Not good...so go strengthen the safety muscles in your shoulder, and take a load off of your neck.

I know this is a big list. But it's better to have more options than fewer options. I hope these are useful to you!

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