

Natural Sinusitis Treatments That Actually Work

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Sinusitis affects 31 million Americans annually, with many seeking treatments that cause side effects. Natural remedies will address the inflammation and provide relief without the adverse effects of pharmaceuticals
- › Your sinuses are eight cavities located in your head that filter and humidify the air you inhale, removing irritants and providing protection from head impacts
- › Effective home remedies include saline nasal irrigation, steam therapy, staying hydrated, warm compresses, reducing mold exposure, sleeping at an elevated angle, and using humidifiers
- › Anti-inflammatory foods like garlic, onions, ginger, turmeric, pineapple, chili peppers, horseradish, coconut oil, and citrus fruits help manage sinusitis by reducing congestion and fighting infections
- › Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) is another natural solution for treating sinusitis. Research demonstrates it has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antifungal properties that provide significant relief for patients

Statistics indicate that around 31 million Americans develop sinusitis each year, and 16 million of them seek outpatient care for relief.¹ While there are many available pharmaceutical (and even surgical) remedies for long-term relief, this often causes side effects.

Instead of relying on methods that cause further harm, it's better to explore strategies that address the root cause of inflammation, thus providing relief without dangerous side effects. But first, let's dive in and learn the role of sinuses in your system.

What Are the Sinuses?

While you can't see them, your sinuses are unsung heroes located inside your head. They play multiple roles, from filtering the air you breathe to absorbing bumps.^{2,3}

- **You have eight sinuses inside your head** – Humans have four pairs of sinuses. One pair is found above your eyes and in your forehead. There are also other sinus cavities between your eyes, just behind the nose, while the biggest sinuses are found under your eyes, behind your cheeks.
- **Sinuses filter air entering your head** – As you inhale, the mucus and tiny hair strands humidify the air before entering your lungs. That's because breathing in cold, dry air causes issues such as coughing and wheezing.
- **Sinuses also remove irritants** – The mucus and hair in your sinuses also trap pollutants, such as dirt and dust that are eventually removed from your nasal cavity.⁴
- **They provide an extra layer of protection** – In the event that you bump your head into something, your sinuses will protect the brain from experiencing a direct impact.

While your sinuses generally work well, sometimes they become inflamed, leading to a condition known as sinusitis. This causes symptoms like stuffy nose, mucus dripping down your throat (postnasal drip), runny nose, facial pressure, fever, headache, and coughs.⁵

Home Remedies for Sinusitis

Sinusitis usually goes away on its own after a few days, but there are times when the symptoms are bothersome and eventually affect your daily routine. While it's tempting to take a pill for your pain, this isn't necessary – there are many ways to manage sinusitis naturally, according to The Hearty Soul:⁶

- **Saline nasal irrigation** – This is an affordable, effective treatment for sinusitis. To create an irrigation solution, mix salt with filtered water. Then, using a nasal irrigation tool, like a neti pot, use the saline solution to flush out the mucus and relieve your sinuses.
- **Steam therapy** – Another simple remedy is to place your head above the steam from a bowl of warm water and inhale deeply for several minutes. For better relief, you can add essential oils like eucalyptus.
- **Staying hydrated** – While you're dealing with sinusitis, it's important you drink enough water. Dehydration makes the mucus thicker, which clogs your sinuses – the perfect environment for bacteria to grow.⁷
- **Warm compress** – Place a warm compress on your face to reduce swelling and pressure caused by congestion. You can combine it with steam therapy for better results.
- **Reduced exposure to mold** – The presence of mold in your home is a common trigger for sinus infections because the fungi release airborne spores that enter your nose. To reduce mold exposure, focus on improving air quality in your home and fixing any spots that have moldy growths.
- **Elevated sleeping angle** – Getting enough sleep is important to let your body fight and recover from the cause of sinusitis, but did you know you can influence the results even more? Sleeping with your head at an elevated angle helps recovery by preventing mucus from pooling while you sleep.

- **Humidifier** – A small humidifier will help add moisture into your indoor air by releasing water vapor. A humidity level between 30% and 60% helps keep your sinuses from drying while also preventing mold growth.
- **Essential oils** – The aroma of essential oils such as peppermint will help provide a cooling sensation, providing relief and opening your nasal passages. You can combine this with your humidifier for greater results.
- **Sunlight exposure** – According to a study published in Nutrition and Metabolic Insights, “Evidence has shown that patients with sinusitis have lower vitamin D levels, and vitamin D supplementation alleviates their symptoms.”⁸ That being said, I strongly recommend that you get it through sunlight exposure.

Sunlight triggers other beneficial effects in your body, aside from producing vitamin D. However, it's important that you avoid direct sunlight during peak hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) until you've reduced your consumption of vegetable oils for at least two to six months. This is because the linoleic acid (LA) found in these oils accumulate in your skin. When it interacts with the sun's UV rays, it triggers inflammation and DNA damage.

For a more in-depth understanding on how to safely optimize vitamin D production, read [“Everything You Need to Know About Vitamin D for Your Health.”](#)

- **How to speed up removing of linoleic acid (LA) on your skin** – Interestingly enough, I recently found out that there's a way to help purge LA embedded in your skin faster, and this is by simply adding raw, grass fed milk into your diet. Raw milk contains a special fat called C15:0.

Increasing your intake of C15:0 to 2 grams per day causes your keratinocytes (the outermost layer of your skin) to incorporate it instead of LA within a single skin-cycle (around four weeks). This means that if you continue drinking raw, grass fed milk, the LA on your skin should go down by 25% to 30% within three to four months.

When you keep it up for 12 to 18 months, the LA in your adipose tissue will be down by 80%, instead of two to three years by following a low-LA diet alone. After doing this, whatever remaining ultraviolet risks on your skin come from direct DNA damage and can't be fixed by your diet.

Healthy Foods That Help with Sinusitis

Home remedies are just one part of the equation when it comes to managing sinusitis. Your diet also plays a huge role, as it helps manage inflammation and eliminate viruses, fungi, or bacteria that's causing the symptoms:⁹

- **Garlic** — A common cooking ingredient, this herb contains allicin, which is released when crushed. Allicin is the **primary sulfur compound** in garlic that's responsible for its pungent aroma. As for its therapeutic properties, allicin helps thin the mucus blocking your nasal passages, as well as reduce inflammation.

Consuming garlic raw will allow you to reap most of its benefits, but make sure to chop or crush it before eating it whole. If you don't like the taste of raw garlic, consider trying aged black garlic, which is made by fermenting garlic bulbs. One study noted that it has a "sweet and sour taste and no strong odor,"¹⁰ which can entice consumers averse to fresh garlic.

- **Onions** — This pungent vegetable is well-known for its anti-inflammatory properties. Like garlic, it also contains sulfuric compounds that help clear nasal congestion.
- **Ginger** — Another herb renowned for its anti-inflammatory properties, ginger contains antihistamine and other bioactive compounds that help manage nausea and allergic reactions.
- **Turmeric** — Known for its distinctive color that gives curry its famed appearance, research shows that turmeric contains anti-inflammatory compounds that help reduce nasal congestion, sneezing, and rhinorrhea.¹¹

- **Pineapple** – If mucus is already dripping from your nose, try eating a few slices of pineapple. This fruit contains a unique enzyme called **bromelain**, which helps reduce mucus production, as well as inflammation.
- **Chili peppers** – If you enjoy eating spicy food, then you're already getting the benefit of chili peppers regularly – capsaicin. This compound helps thin out the mucus, allowing it to drain better as well as improve air circulation.
- **Horseradish** – This vegetable contains beneficial sulfur, similar to garlic and onions. As with the other herbs, this one also helps thin the mucus from the upper respiratory passages and improve air circulation.

To take horseradish, try grating some in your mouth and chewing it until the flavor goes away. A pinch of it will also work, but you'll need a stronger variety.

- **Coconut oil** – This common cooking ingredient contains antibacterial and antiviral properties, making it good for microbe-related sinus infections. When using coconut oil, make sure it comes from a reputable producer, and that it is not adulterated with other oils.
- **Citrus fruits** – If you've developed sinusitis due to a bacterial or viral infection, supporting your immune system with vitamin C from citrus fruits is an effective strategy. These fruits also contain water and dietary fiber, which helps your digestive health.
- **Homemade herbal tea** – Sipping tea made from a combination of healthy ingredients will help soothe your sinuses. Mix cloves, black pepper, ginger, basil leaves, and tea into boiling water. Pour it in a cup, then add raw honey to taste.

The ingredients in this tea recipe contain anti-inflammatory and antibacterial compounds that are helpful in managing sinusitis. Interestingly, research¹² has shown that basil also contains bioactive compounds that decrease mucus secretion.

Dimethyl Sulfoxide – Another Solution to Sinus-Related Conditions

Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) is a compound synthesized in 1866 by Alexander Zaytsev, a Russian scientist. He was able to create it by oxidizing dimethyl sulfide, which is a byproduct of the kraft process (making paper from wood pulp). It is also a naturally occurring compound from the kraft process itself.¹³

Published research shows that DMSO contains anti-inflammatory properties that are helpful for various conditions, such as **injuries, chronic pain, autoimmune diseases**. Interestingly, it's been shown to help manage sinusitis, as well as other infections of the nose and throat. An article from A Midwestern Doctor compiles a list of studies showcasing its therapeutic effects:¹⁴

- **DMSO provides measurable results** – Researchers administered DMSO to seven female patients (aged 43 to 66) diagnosed with sinusitis. According to the findings, two had a good response, while the remaining five had an excellent response.¹⁵
- **Research regarding DMSO's benefits was buried decades ago** – According to the book "The Persecuted Drug: The Story of DMSO," Merck sent out guidance to their investigators on what they learned from treating around 4,000 patients for up to 18 months, which was way back in 1965.

According to A Midwestern Doctor, the investigators said that "A dilute solution to the nasal mucosa has resulted in the discharge of a great deal of infected material from the sinuses and relief of pain."

- **DMSO also helps sinusitis in children** – In 1992, Russian researchers discovered that administering 10% DMSO to the sinuses, followed by local oxygenation, provided complete recovery in 49 out of 52 children within two years. Conversely, those who received standard treatments (the control group) didn't fare better.

As mentioned earlier, sinusitis can also be caused by exposure to fungi. And as it happens, DMSO has antifungal properties, reinforcing its position as a viable alternative for sinusitis. According to A Midwestern Doctor:¹⁶

- **Results vary, but benefits are evident nonetheless** – In a 2013 study, researchers used DMSO and antifungal agents on six different *Candida* species. According to the data, 0.5% to 1% DMSO had antifungal results, but the inhibitor effect varied.
- **DMSO treats ringworm** – In a 1965 study,¹⁷ DMSO was found to be effective against ringworm and athlete's foot, especially when combined with an antifungal agent.

Frequently Asked Questions About Natural Strategies to Manage Sinusitis

Q: What causes sinusitis and how common is it in America?

A: Sinusitis occurs when the sinus cavities become inflamed, often because of infections or irritants. This inflammation leads to symptoms such as nasal congestion, facial pressure, postnasal drip, and headaches. In the United States, sinusitis affects about 31 million people annually, with approximately 16 million seeking outpatient care for relief.

Q: What role do sinuses play in overall health and respiratory function?

A: Sinuses serve several important functions within the body. Located in various parts of the skull, these air-filled cavities help humidify and filter the air before it reaches the lungs. They trap pollutants and irritants through mucus and tiny hairs, providing a first line of defense against environmental contaminants.

Additionally, the sinuses act as a cushion to protect the brain in the event of physical impact. When these cavities become blocked or irritated, they lead to sinusitis.

Q: How can sinusitis be managed at home using natural methods?

A: Managing sinusitis at home is achievable through various natural remedies. Using saline nasal irrigation, such as with a neti pot, helps to flush out mucus and clear the nasal passages. Inhaling steam, especially when infused with essential oils like eucalyptus, can relieve congestion.

Staying hydrated supports the thinning of mucus, and applying warm compresses to the face can ease pressure and inflammation. Improving indoor air quality, sleeping with the head elevated, and using a humidifier all contribute to sinus health. These approaches offer effective relief without relying on medication.

Q: What dietary choices support sinus health and reduce inflammation?

A: A diet rich in anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial foods will significantly aid in recovering from sinusitis. Consuming raw garlic, onions, ginger, turmeric, and spicy foods like chili peppers helps to reduce mucus buildup and combat infection. Pineapple, due to its enzyme bromelain, and citrus fruits, which are high in vitamin C, support immune function and decrease inflammation.

Fermented and pungent foods such as horseradish and aged black garlic also aid in clearing respiratory passages. In addition, coconut oil's natural antibacterial properties make it a beneficial addition to meals or as a supplement.

Q: What is DMSO and how does it contribute to sinusitis treatment?

A: Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) is a compound with powerful anti-inflammatory and antifungal properties that have shown promise in treating sinusitis. Research has indicated that applying a diluted solution to the nasal area will lead to significant relief, including the drainage of infected material and reduced sinus pressure.

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