

<http://www.aolhealth.com/condition-center/sinuses/prevent-sinus-infection-allergies-cold>

Prevent Allergies and Colds From Becoming Sinus Infections

By Rebecca Geiger

It's spring. Flowers are blooming, the grass is green and you just want to get out and wallow in those warmer temps. However, [allergy sufferers](#) and those who succumb to spring [colds](#) need to be wary that when symptoms linger, a [sinus infection](#) can develop.

For allergy sufferers, environmental control is key, says Jordan S. Josephson, M.D., sinus and [nasal](#) specialist, director of New York Nasal and Sinus Center in Manhattan and author of the book "[Sinus Relief Now.](#)" That means keeping windows closed when it's warmer, leaving the AC on recirculation mode to filter out [pollens](#) and ensuring filters are changed regularly.

The [American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology](#) recommends:

1. Doing a spring-cleaning of areas like windows and bookshelves, which collect allergy-provoking dust and mold throughout the winter.
2. Knowing your local pollen count and postponing [outdoor activities](#) until late morning (pollens are usually released in the early morning hours).
3. Leaving windows up and the AC on when driving.
4. Staying [indoors](#) on hot, dry, windy days.
5. Wearing a filter mask when mowing the lawn and drying your laundry inside instead of hanging it outside where [allergens](#) can

collect on it.

6. Being aware of high mold spore counts after a heavy rain or in the evening.

Equally imperative is cleaning up and changing clothes when you've been outside, says Josephson, since [allergens like pollen](#) can stick to fabrics and be deposited from clothes onto furniture, pillows and the people around you.

"Before you go to bed, take a shower, wash your hair, change your clothes," he notes. "Otherwise you're putting pollen into bedding where you're spending the next eight hours sleeping."

The same rule applies for kids, especially if they've been playing outside. Before they hop into bed, change and bathe them if anyone in the family has allergies.

Doctors suggest irrigating sinuses at the [first sign of colds](#) or allergies. Sprays like Ayr or Little Noses (for kids) and Neti pots -- teapot-shaped devices used for nasal rinsing -- can help remove stuck mucus from nasal passages. [Saline](#) irrigation not only heads off infections but also reduces the need for antibiotics in those who are prone. Experts advise flushing sinuses every day and if necessary, taking OTC antihistamines, such as [Claritin](#), which, with your doctor's approval, can be used before symptoms start.

There are also the big guns. You can't lock yourself in a sealed room, but if other methods fail, [prescription medication](#), such as oral steroids or nasal steroid and antihistamine sprays, are urged. Taken regularly, they avert infection, and for those predisposed, can be started prior to the onset of spring.

Staying [hydrated](#) also eases symptoms by thinning mucous and allowing it to flow freely. Reducing [stress](#) and keeping your [immune system](#) strong by eating plenty of fruits and vegetables rich in [antioxidants](#) can be beneficial, too. The alternative minded might try a

halotherapy or [salt](#) therapy clinic, which mimics the microclimate of salt caves via sea salt, reputed to help clear nasal passages.

Swimming in salt water can also be soothing.

“My patients tell me when they’re at the beach and the wind isn’t bad, they feel great,” says Josephson.

Untreated, [sinusitis](#) can lead to more serious complications, including [meningitis](#) or [vision problems](#). So if cold or allergy symptoms worsen despite your best efforts, be sure to see a specialist. New combinations of medical/surgical therapy are also available.

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