

## **Candida and Chronic Sinus Problems**

Sinusitis, an illness that affects nearly 37 million Americans, is an inflammation of the membranes of the nose and sinuses. Sinusitis frequently causes painful headaches, runny nose, nasal passage congestion and swelling, and a diminished sense of taste and smell. The condition affects the following sinus areas: frontal (above the eyes), maxillary (cheekbone area), ethmoid (behind the bridge of the nose) and sphenoid (behind the eyes.) The skin of the nasal passages has tiny little hairs projecting from it called cilia. The movement of the cilia helps push mucus produced in the sinuses into the respiratory tract—generally, this movement helps to clear the respiratory tract of any debris. However, swelling of the sinuses interferes with the normal flow of mucus; when the mucus becomes trapped in the sinuses it may cause excruciating pressure in the nasal passages. This blockage and swelling also fosters an excellent environment for the growth of infection-causing bacteria and fungus.

In 1999, a medical study at the ENT University Hospital in Graz, Austria provided evidence that chronic sinus problems (also known as chronic rhinosinusitis) can be caused by an immune reaction to fungi in the nose. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota later confirmed the study. Fungus and mold spores present in the air are breathed in constantly. Many people can be highly sensitive to these fungi, due to individual genetic compositions and environmental factors. This study reiterated a long-held belief by many practitioners in the alternative health community: that a yeast-related fungus known as Candida, may cause or contribute to a variety of health problems, including sinusitis. Until the publication of the study, medical doctors often downplayed this idea.

Many individuals suffering from Candida-related chronic sinus problems become discouraged with the success rate of modern medical treatments. This is due to the fact that frequently prescribed treatments such as antibiotics, anti-histamines, nasal steroid sprays and systemic steroids, may not completely cure chronic sinusitis because they primarily target bacteria and not the fungus. Holistic healthcare practitioners have developed a number of alternative or supplementary therapies to aid in the treatment of sinusitis: 1. Irrigation of the sinuses with a salt-water or goldenseal solution may clear the nasal passages of mucus. 2. Contrast hydrotherapy (hot and cold compresses, alternating 3 minutes hot, 30 seconds cold, repeated 3 times always ending with cold) applied directly over the sinuses can relieve pressure and enhance healing. 3. A direct inhalation of essential oil vapors (2 drops of oil to 2 cups of water) using thyme, rosemary, and lavender can help open the sinuses and kill bacteria that cause infection. 4. Acupuncture can also be a very effective treatment. 5. Internally, holistic healthcare practitioners recommend Vitamins A, C, and E, and the mineral zinc.

**Candida Support** [www.candidasupport.org](http://www.candidasupport.org)

References:

1. Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 2001-2005. [www.mayoclinic.org/sinusitis-rst/fungi.html](http://www.mayoclinic.org/sinusitis-rst/fungi.html).

2. Health from A to Z. Gale Encyclopedia of Medicine, Published December, 2002 by the Gale Group

<http://www.healthatoz.com/healthatoz/Atoz/ency/sinusitis.jsp>