

Thrive Across America**healthwörks**
by KAISER PERMANENTE.

Sinus setbacks



If your nose begs for a tissue, and your head feels full, you could be one of [about 18 million Americans](#) who suffer from sinusitis—an inflammation of the sinuses, which are the cavities around your nasal passages.

Allergies often cause chronic sinusitis (lasting 12 weeks or more), but viruses such as a cold can trigger acute infections. Both conditions are treated with antibiotics 70 to 80 percent of the time. One issue with antibiotics is the concern that they can lead to the development of drug-resistant bacteria. So should you pop a pill or ride it out? What other treatments might work?

- Help keep your sinuses clear by cleansing them with a saline rinse. If trouble has already set in, squirt the salt-water mixture into each nostril four times a day.
- Try steam treatments to help open up the nasal cavities and drain mucus.
- If you're battling multiple symptoms (facial pain, foul-smelling or greenish discharge, and fever), see your doctor.
- Feel free to inquire about alternative treatments. Even if your doctor recommends antibiotics, you can ask about a less aggressive course of action.

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