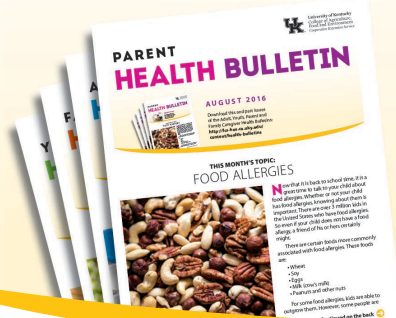


# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



SEPTEMBER 2017

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: SINUSES



**T**his time of year, your child may have more runny noses and colds. Sinuses are an important part of our bodies and something that we do not think about until there is a problem. Understanding what the sinuses are and some concerns may help you understand sinus issues that your child may have.

### What are sinuses?

The sinuses are the air-filled spaces that are found in the bones in the head and behind the face. A person has eight sinuses, but they are in pairs. When you look at your face in the mirror, your sinuses are on both sides of your nose (in your cheek area), behind and between your eyes, behind the forehead and at the back of the nasal area.

Much like the nose has a mucus membrane, or the thin, moist tissue that

Continued on the back 



## *If a cold lasts for more than 10 to 14 days (sometimes you may have a low-grade fever), you may have a sinus infection.*

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lines the nose, the sinuses have one too. The mucus membrane has a very important job to do. This membrane helps keep the air that is breathed moist. It also helps trap germs and dust in the air that are inhaled. The body produces mucus (also commonly known as snot) to help.

When you have a cold or allergies, that mucus membrane gets swollen and produces even more mucus.

### Why do we have sinuses?

Would you believe that scientists do not know exactly why we have sinuses? There are some theories out there though. Some scientists think that part of the reason is that it helps to keep the head from being too heavy for the body. Because sinuses are basically pockets of air, and air is light, that helps a person keep his or her head held high. Sinuses also affect a person's voice. The different sizes of sinuses give different depth and tone to voices.

### Having a runny nose

There can be many reasons for a runny nose, such as having a cold or the flu, as well as allergies.

**A cold or flu:** When you have a cold or the flu, the sinuses can fill with extra mucus. The extra mucus is created to help keep the germs from getting into the lungs and the rest of the body.

**Allergies:** Sinuses can feel pressure when you have allergies. Allergies are when your body reacts to a substance like dust like it was a germ. So the body reacts just like it would if a person was getting sick.

**Infection:** Sometimes the sinuses get infected. When this happens, your child may get a fever, or have a runny nose for several days, or even a cough. If your child has a sinus infection, you may need to see your healthcare provider. Getting a runny nose and not feeling well happens to everyone from time to time. Knowing a little more about the sinuses will help you understand what is happening in the body when you are not feeling well.



### When good sinuses go bad

What about that cold that won't go away? A cold virus can:

- damage the delicate cilia so that mucus is not swept away
- cause the mucous lining of the nose to become swollen, which narrows and blocks the small opening from the sinuses into the nose
- lead to the production of more mucus, which is often thicker and stickier, making it harder to flow out of the sinuses

When the tiny openings that drain the sinuses get blocked, mucus becomes trapped in the sinuses. Like water in a stagnant pond, it makes a good home for bacteria, viruses or fungi to grow.

If a cold lasts for more than 10 to 14 days (sometimes you may have a low-grade fever), you may have sinusitis (say: syne-yuh-SY-tus). This means an infection of the sinuses. Sinusitis is a pretty common infection. Close to 37 million people in the United States have sinusitis each year.

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**HEALTH BULLETIN**

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