



## MEDICAL CONDITIONS

# ALLERGIES OR SINUSITIS

**Stuffy nose? It could be allergies or sinusitis as the symptoms for these conditions overlap, but their causes are slightly different.**

**Allergies:** Your nasal passages will swell when you're exposed to an allergen – something you're allergic to, like pollen, dust, mites, mould or pet fur. This response is the sign of your body fighting something it thinks will harm it and so you develop a stuffy nose, sometimes accompanied by the sniffles, wheezing as you breathe and watery, itchy eyes.

The symptoms will develop almost immediately after you have been exposed to the allergen.

**Sinusitis:** You'll also get a stuffy nose as a result of sinusitis, but it's common to get sinusitis as a result of allergies or because you have a cold, both of which are associated with the symptoms of sinusitis anyway. It's these symptoms that cause the nasal passages and sinuses to become inflamed because mucus isn't draining from them correctly due to an increase in production.

Reduced drainage can cause an infection with pain and pressure in the area.

Other symptoms of sinusitis include:

- Thick, green or yellow mucus
- Pain in the forehead, cheeks or eyes
- Headache or pain in the jaw
- Post-nasal drip
- Bad breath due to the infection
- Cough and sore throat
- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever

Symptoms may develop after the onset of allergies or a cold and can carry on after the allergies or cold have cleared up. Acute sinusitis will clear within 4 weeks while chronic sinusitis will last for 3 months or longer.

**Treatment:** Both allergies and sinusitis are typically treated with decongestants, antihistamines or supportive care. More complicated cases of allergies can be treated with cortisone, and sinusitis with antibiotics.