

Sinusitis Relief—Over the Counter (OTC) Handout

There are many very effective medications available over-the-counter (OTC) for relief of cold / sinus symptoms. Unfortunately, there are so many products that a visit to your pharmacy can be an overwhelming experience.

We recommend that you look for the following medications individually, or packaged together as “multi-symptom” products.

Decongestants

(Help to open up breathing passages, allow sinuses to drain better)

- Pseudoephedrine: regular dose (30-60mg) or 12-hour sustained release dose (120 mg)
- Mucinex®D 12 hour (combination mucolytic & decongestant)
- Nasal sprays (Afrin®, Neo-Synephrine®, Dristan®): these work very well but **do not use for more than 5 days** or you can get “hooked” on the sprays. If you use these sprays for too long, “rebound” can occur where your nasal membranes will swell when you try to stop the spray, and your nose will be more blocked than ever. You may resume the sprays after a 7 day break. *When you apply these sprays, apply 1 spray per nostril then wait 5 minutes, apply the 2nd spray, wait 5 minutes again and apply the 3rd and final spray.

Expectorant

(Thins out secretions, easier to clear from the nose or cough from the lungs)

- Guaifenesin: Mucinex® [600mg tabs, 1-2 tabs every 12 hour] is preferred. Liquid guaifenesin is also available at lower doses [ex. Robitussin®].

Cough Suppressants

(Especially helpful for nighttime cough)

- Dextromethorphan, and others are fine as well

Other Products That May be Helpful

- Breathe-right strips: will help you breath better at night.
- Saline nasal spray (“ocean spray”): will help you to clear nasal secretions.
- Vapor medications (ex. Vicks® Vapor Rub).
- Humidifier in your bedroom (either cool mist or warm steam). It is critical to keep it clean, follow instructions carefully.

** Products to avoid: **antihistamines**. These tend to dry up your nose, making it harder for secretions to drain. This could actually make you worse.

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