

REALLY?

The Claim: Humming Can Ease Sinus Problems

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By [Anahad O'Connor](#)
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THE FACTS | <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/21/health/21really.html>

Dealing with a cold is bad enough, but when it leads to a sinus infection, the misery can double. Some researchers have proposed a surprising remedy: channeling your inner Sinatra.

Sinus infections □ which afflict more than 37 million Americans every year □ generally occur when the lining of the sinuses becomes inflamed, trapping air and pus and other secretions, and leading to pain, headaches and congestion. Because the inflammation is often caused by upper-respiratory infections, people with asthma and allergies are more vulnerable than others to chronic sinusitis.

Keeping the sinuses healthy and infection-free requires ventilation □ keeping air flowing smoothly between the sinus and nasal cavities. And what better way to keep air moving through the sinuses and nasal cavity than by humming a tune?



Credit...Christoph Niemann

In [a study in The American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine](#), researchers examined this by comparing airflow in people when they hummed and when they quietly exhaled. Specifically, they looked to see if humming led to greater levels of exhaled nitric oxide, a gas produced in the sinuses. Ultimately, nitric oxides during humming rose 15-fold.

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[Another study a year later](#) in The European Respiratory Journal found a similar effect: humming resulted in a large increase in nasal nitric oxide, “caused by a rapid gas exchange in the paranasal sinuses.” Since reduced airflow plays a major role in sinus infections, the researchers suggested that daily periods of humming might help people lower their risk of chronic problems. But further study is needed, they said.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

Studies show that humming helps increase airflow between the sinus and nasal cavities, which could potentially help protect against sinus infections.

ANAHAD O'CONNOR scitimes@nytimes.com

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