

## Tis the Season for **Managing Sinus Health**

Winter brings colder weather and, for many, an increase in sinus issues. Dry indoor air can irritate nasal passages, and colds can lead to painful sinus infections. Here are a few tips to maintain optimal sinus health during the colder months:

- 1. Stay Hydrated:** Keeping mucous membranes moist is key to preventing irritation. Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- 2. Humidify Your Home:** Using a humidifier can add moisture to dry winter air, helping prevent sinus discomfort.
- 3. Practice Good Hygiene:** Washing your hands frequently can prevent colds and infections that may lead to sinus issues.
- 4. Get the Flu Vaccine:** Reducing your risk of the flu can help prevent flu-related sinus complications.
- 5. Keep Allergens at Bay:** Regularly clean bedding and living areas to minimize exposure to dust mites and other allergens.
- 6. Limit Exposure to Cold Temperatures:** Sudden changes in temperature can irritate your sinuses, so try to minimize time spent in cold environments.
- 7. Bundle Up:** When you're out in the chilly air, protect your nose and mouth with a scarf in cold weather to prevent dryness and irritation.

For more personalized advice or if your symptoms persist, call (828) 322-2183 to schedule an appointment with one of our specialists at Carolina ENT.



# Winter Allergies 101

Winter allergies differ from allergies in other seasons due to the unique indoor environment and lifestyle changes during the colder months. Unlike spring or fall, where pollen is the primary irritant, winter allergies are predominantly triggered by indoor allergens.

**Our team at Carlina ENT recommends the following tips to manage allergies this time of year.**

- 1. Identify Your Triggers:** Common winter allergens include dust mites, pet dander and molds. These can be more prevalent as we spend more time indoors. Understanding what triggers your allergies is the first step in managing them effectively.
- 2. Stay Ahead of Weather Reports:** Keep an eye on the weather forecast and plan your days accordingly. Cold, windy days can stir up allergens and irritants.
- 3. Use a Humidifier Wisely:** Too much humidity can encourage mold growth and dust mites, while too little can irritate your airways. Maintaining indoor humidity levels between 30%–50% can help manage allergy symptoms. Additionally, ensure your humidifier is clean to prevent the growth of mold and dust mites.
- 4. Wash Bedding Weekly:** Using hot water to wash your sheets, pillowcases and blankets can kill dust mites and remove allergens, ensuring a better night's sleep.
- 5. Upgrade Your Furnace Filter:** Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter in your heating system to trap allergens and prevent them from circulating through your home.
- 6. Remove Shoes and Outerwear:** Keep allergens from entering your living space by removing shoes and outerwear before coming inside.
- 7. Regularly Clean Pet Beds:** Pets can carry in allergens from outside and contribute to indoor allergen levels. Wash their bedding frequently to remove dander and dust.



**If you or someone in your family has been struggling with winter allergy symptoms, our expert team at Carolina ENT can help. Take the first step to finding relief by calling (828) 322-2183 today to schedule an allergy consultation.**

# Navigating the **Winter Illness Maze**

Winter brings the joy of holidays, but it often accompanies a less welcome gift—the seasonal spike in sickness. Determining the cause of your symptoms is the first step for proper treatment and relief.

## **Colds**

Colds are characterized by a sore throat, runny nose, coughing and sneezing. They typically resolve within a week without requiring medical treatment beyond over-the-counter relief and rest. In addition to resting, consider using a humidifier, drinking warm liquids and gargling with salt water to relieve symptoms.

## **The Flu**

Symptoms of the flu, or influenza, include fever, body aches, fatigue and a more severe cough. Unlike the common cold, the flu can lead to serious health issues, particularly in vulnerable populations such as the elderly, young children and those with pre-existing health conditions. Treatment for the flu centers on rest, fluids and antiviral medications if prescribed early in the illness. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza, with annual flu shots recommended for almost everyone six months and older, as the virus strains can change from year to year.

## **COVID-19**

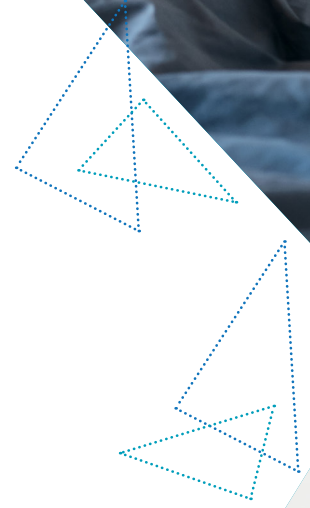
Recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19 is critical for effective treatment and preventing the spread of the virus. Symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus and vary widely, including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. If you experience these symptoms, self-isolate and contact a healthcare provider for medical advice and testing.

## **Sinus Infection**

Sinus infections, or sinusitis, are characterized by symptoms like nasal congestion, thick nasal discharge and facial pressure. Treatment typically included nasal saline irrigation, decongestants and nasal corticosteroid sprays to relieve inflammation. For bacterial infections, antibiotics may be necessary. In cases where sinusitis becomes chronic or doesn't respond to medication, procedures like balloon sinuplasty or traditional sinus surgery might be recommended to improve drainage and alleviate symptoms.

## **Winter Allergies**

Winter allergies are triggered by indoor allergens and persist as long as the individual is in contact with the allergen. Symptoms include itchy eyes, sneezing, runny or stuffy nose, coughing and wheezing. Managing these allergies primarily involves reducing exposure to these triggers.



⋮ **If you're struggling with illness this winter, the Carolina ENT team is here to help. Take the first steps toward relief by calling (828) 322-2183 to schedule a consultation.**

# Breathe Easy

## with Balloon Sinuplasty or Sinus Surgery

**For those constantly battling with sinusitis, finding effective relief is crucial. Traditional methods often involve medications or surgery, but a new option known as balloon sinuplasty offers a gentler alternative to conventional sinus surgery.**

Balloon sinuplasty is a technique where a small, flexible balloon catheter is inserted into the sinus passageways. It is then gently inflated to restructure and open the sinuses, allowing them to drain more effectively without cutting or removing bone or tissue. Following the procedure, the balloon is deflated and removed, leaving the sinuses open and air flowing freely.

This procedure is particularly beneficial for people with chronic sinusitis who haven't responded well to medication. It can be performed under local anesthesia in an outpatient setting, making it less daunting than traditional surgery. The recovery period is notably shorter, with most patients experiencing a return to normal activities within a couple of days.

For more severe or complicated sinus conditions, traditional sinus surgery may still be the recommended approach. This could involve the removal of bone or tissue to enlarge the sinus opening, aiming to clear blocked pathways and restore function.

Choosing between balloon sinuplasty and traditional sinus surgery ultimately depends on the individual's specific condition and medical history. Both options aim to enhance the quality of life by alleviating symptoms, reducing infections and improving breathing. Our team will work with you to determine which procedure is the best fit for your needs.

**If sinus issues are keeping you from enjoying life to its fullest, consult with a specialist at Carolina ENT. Breathing should come easy—and with the right treatment, it can. Contact our team at (828) 322-2183 to get started.**

[www.carolinaearenoethroat.com](http://www.carolinaearenoethroat.com)

**(828) 322-2183**

### *Three convenient locations*

#### **Hickory**

304 10th Avenue NE  
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#### **Lincolnton**

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#### **Morganton**

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