

My Shotgun for the Sinus

Douglas R. Briggs, DC, Dipl. Ac. (IAMA), DAAPM, EMT

Spring is here, and allergies, sinus congestion, and runny noses will soon be a big problem. I live in the northeast part of the country, sinus problems are a big issue. Folks that grew up here refer to their "normal" sinus problems. I have heard more than a few times from patients that moved to this area that they never had any sinus problems before until they moved to Delaware. I am not a meteorologist, but my basic understanding is that we sit in the center of the "northeast corridor" - dust, debris, pollutants, etc. from the region are carried by the prevailing winds right over our state and out over the sea.

Most people are conditioned to quickly pop some type of over-the-counter Western medicine sinus remedy, which overrides their natural immune response and makes them feel better, but many of these compounds can diminish or deplete the body's stores of important vitamins, minerals, and other essential nutrients. Now arguably, some sinus reaction is good. If debris or an allergen gets up in your nose, the mucous membranes should coat it and the cilia should help to move it out. This is a natural, designed defense of the body to protect the inner respiratory system from irritation and injury. But sometimes (and certainly in my region) there is so much stuff in the air that this first line of defense gets overwhelmed. The sinuses get congested, there is excess drainage (runny nose), and it just gets hard to breathe.

Since I opened my practice, treating sinus issues has been a big part of my practice. For me personally, I find treating sinuses to be straightforward and quickly effective - so the patient's are usually very happy.

My personal favorite points for treating sinus problems are:

- LI20 "Welcome Fragrance"
- ST3 "Great Bone-Hole"
- DU23 "Upper Star"

I may also include the extra points:

- LI21 "Upper Fragrance" - this is an extra point I was taught many years ago.

Located 1 HUN above LI20 at the border of the nasal cartilage and bone, I have found it greatly enhances the stimulation of LI20:

- GB20 "Wind Pool"
- LI4 "Union Valley"
- SI3 "Back Ravine"

This simple point recipe has served me well for many years. I am sure there are many other points to

be considered and certainly this is not an appropriate protocol for every type of sinus problem, but in cases of allergic sinusitis this set of points has had miraculous benefit for many of my patients.

Arguably, in areas where the amount of debris in the air is high, just treating some points to reduce the sinus congestion is not enough. I am a strong advocate of sinus irrigation. The use of a Neti Pot to gently wash the dust and debris from the sinuses is probably more important and effective than just about any other treatment. If someone has never done sinus irrigation before, it may take a bit of encouragement to get them to pour water up their nose, but the benefit is worth it. It is absolutely amazing the amount of junk that can sit undisturbed up in your head. I once had a patient break up and wash packing from a previous sinus surgery out - almost a year after being released by the surgeon! Pretty gross, but I was the one that was able to help her get all that pressure out of her head. I was the hero that day.

Again, I know this is not an exhaustive list of all the points for sinus problems. Depending on your technique or style you may pursue a totally different protocol. In the short-term, this is my go-to "shotgun" point recipe for sinuses. As always, remember to get a good case history, document your treatment, and follow up with your patient.

References:

1. Drug-Induced Nutrient Depletion Handbook, by R. Pelton et al.

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