Excerpt from Article:

Singer's Guide to Respiratory Health

A practical guide for singers and families

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This article addresses one large area of respiratory health: rhinitis's impact on the mucosal membranes of the upper respiratory tract, which are the body's mainline of defense against airborne illness. Both allergic and non-allergic (vasomotor) rhinitis require evaluation from an ENT and an allergist for proper diagnosis. **Other health conditions not addressed here should be ruled out by a doctor. This is why it is important to ask specifically for referrals to both an ENT (ear, nose, and throat doctor) and an allergist in the case of long-term, frequent catching of respiratory illnesses.** *For the full article, visit the URL above.*

You don't have to catch colds all the time. Learn how to take care of your respiratory tract and voice, in sickness and in health.

At-home strategies that support healthier breathing

- Sleep with a cool-mist **humidifier** nightly, year-round, in dry climates.
- Use an **allergen pillow cover** between the pillow and pillowcase.
- Place an **allergen mattress cover** on top of the mattress.
- Vacuum carpets **at least** once per week, especially if there are shedding pets.
- Use **electrostatic allergen filters** in return air ducts (these are reusable and can be rinsed clean).
- Keep **saline nasal spray** available to rinse nasal passages after dust or dirt exposure.
- Notice if certain scented **candles** exacerbate symptoms, and if so, eliminate them. The same goes for other strong scents.
- Wear a mask during pollen season if you're outside for an extended period.

Additional daily health supports

- Get sufficient, **regular sleep** nightly. This is non-negotiatable. Your body repairs itself during sleep.
- Avoid frequent loud talking and shouting which strain the voice; employ healthy singing technique.
- Take a **daily immune-support vitamin**.
- **Hydrate** well with **water** daily.
- **Limit or eliminate caffeine**, which can be drying to the voice for many people, especially those with more delicate vocal folds.
- **Reduce overall sugar intake and avoid sugary drinks**, as sugar promotes inflammatory immune responses.
- Develop an **exercise routine**. Strong cardiovascular health and muscle tone are proven to support immune function.

Strategies when feeling sick to reduce illness severity and duration

- **Breath warm steam.** Boil water, turn off the burner, place a towel over your head, and inhale warm steam alternating through the nose and mouth for 5 minutes; repeat during the day.
- **Gargle warm salt water several times daily.** **Stir 1/2 teaspoon of table salt into 8 oz of very warm water, not lukewarm or hot. Saline gargle has been proven to interrupt the ability of virus and bacteria to proliferate in the throat, and it washes away irritants. The warm saline promotes osmosis in the tissues that it touches, also reducing swelling and pain. (The folk remedy is spot-on correct!)**
- **Take max of 15–30 mg of zinc daily** at the onset of illness only; excess zinc (and other vitamins) can cause side effects such as excessive thirst.
- **Forgo your regular exercise routine** while your body fights infection. Aerobic exercise can further inflame the bronchial passages.
- **Hydrate with water and/or non-acidic, un-caffinated tea such as ThroatCoat© or cinnamon tea. The warmth can be soothing.**
- **Stay warm.**
- **Get extra sleep.**
- **Take vocal rest if your voice is strained. Avoid all whispering, talking and singing unless you must.**

Take care of your respiratory system, and your voice will thank you!

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