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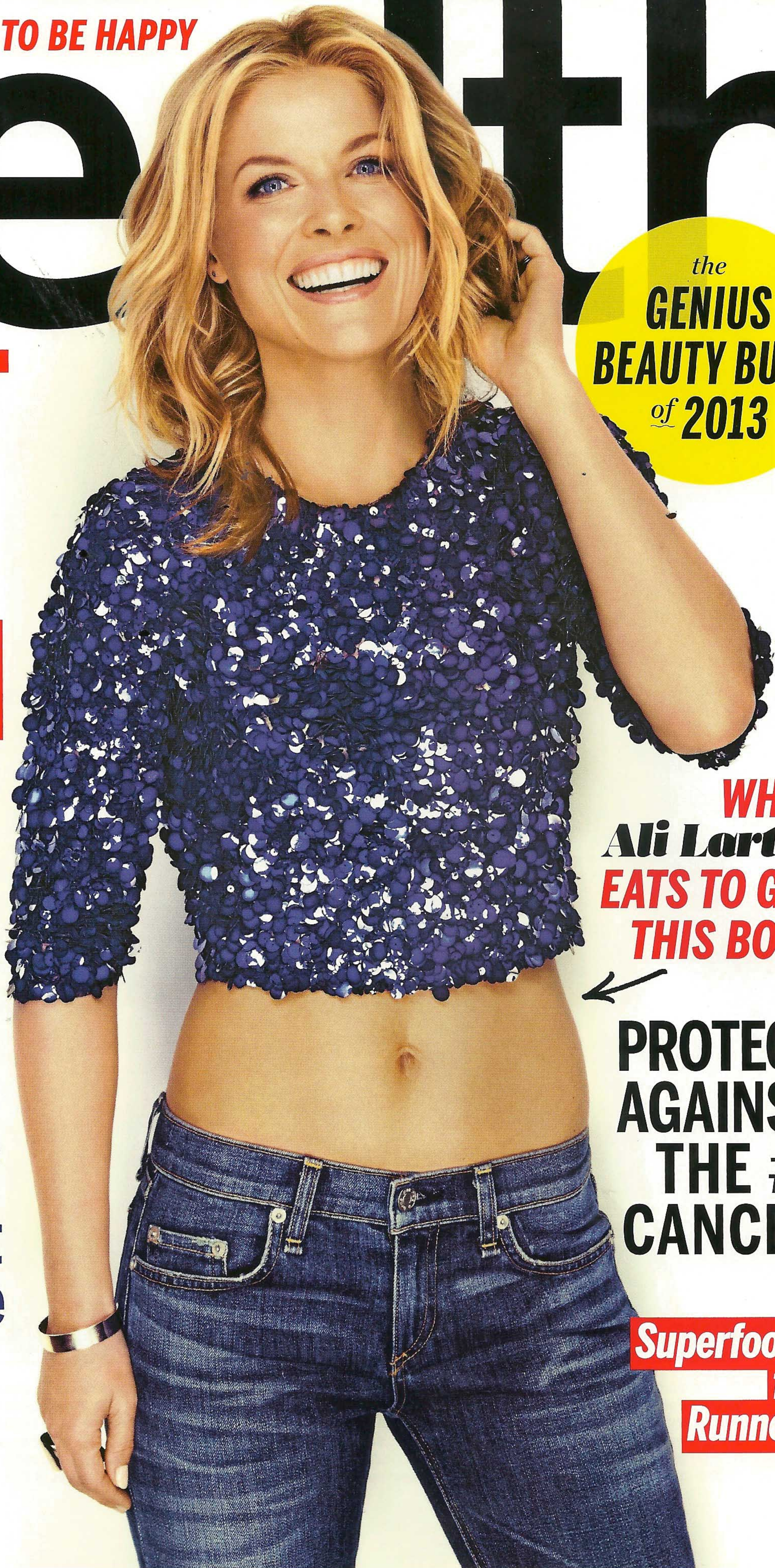
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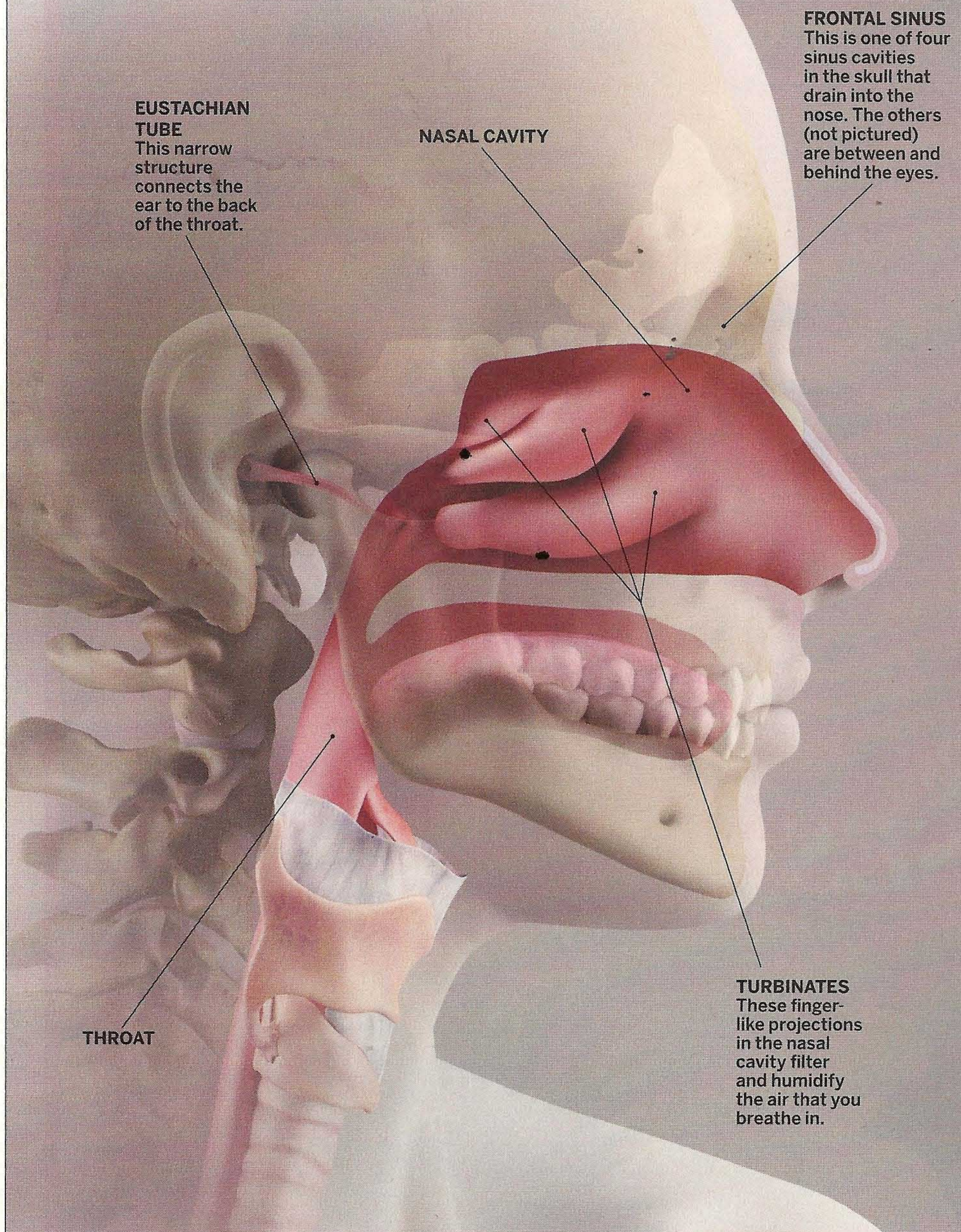
YOUR NOSE & SINUSES

No more sniffing and sneezing! Breathe easier with this guide to combating nasal woes.

By HALLIE LEVINE SKLAR

YOU TEND TO CONSIDER (OR AT least curse) your schnoz most when you have allergies or a cold. But know this: “The nose is the first line of defense for your respiratory system, so it’s important to keep it healthy,” says Mark Dykewicz, MD, director of allergy and immunology at Wake Forest School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, N.C. From old-time cures to new-and-improved medications, check out ways to do just that.

A LOOK INSIDE



GOT A RED NOSE? MAYBE IT'S...

ROSACEA According to the National Rosacea Society, more than 6 million Americans have this condition, which causes redness and pimples. Try products with azelaic acid, such as Aza Clear (\$75; at dermatologists' offices).

BROKEN VESSELS They're a result of sun damage. Products with green tea (like Topix Replenix Green Tea serum, \$56; skinmedix.com) can constrict vessels. Or have your dermatologist blast them with a laser (about \$250).

WINDBURN Use a moisturizer that's noncomedogenic and contains petroleum. One to try: EltaMD (\$14; amazon.com).

IRRITATION Camouflage and heal raw skin with a breathable moisturizer from Oxygenetix (\$66; amazon.com), which helps boost skin cell production.

INFECTION A red bump on your nose that gets bigger and doesn't respond to OTC acne products may signal an infection. Antibiotics can help clear it up.

PROBLEM
No. 1

COLD OR FLU CONGESTION

THE LOWDOWN Snot actually serves a crucial purpose. "When you have a cold or the flu, your nose produces more mucus because of the chemicals white blood cells create in the course of fighting the infection," explains Spencer Payne,

MD, associate professor of rhinology and endoscopic sinus surgery at the University of Virginia.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE A runny and/or stuffy nose, often accompanied by an itchy or sore throat, cough, body aches, sneezing, watery

eyes and possibly a fever.

RX First, use a saline nasal spray from the drugstore to flush out mucus and virus particles. Hot showers can also provide relief. Still stuffed up? Try an over-the-counter decongestant spray such as

Afrin (but stop after three days or you could develop rebound congestion), decongestant pills that contain pseudoephedrine or a mentholated salve like Vicks VapoRub. The best way to avoid the flu is by getting a vaccine each fall.

PROBLEM
No. 2

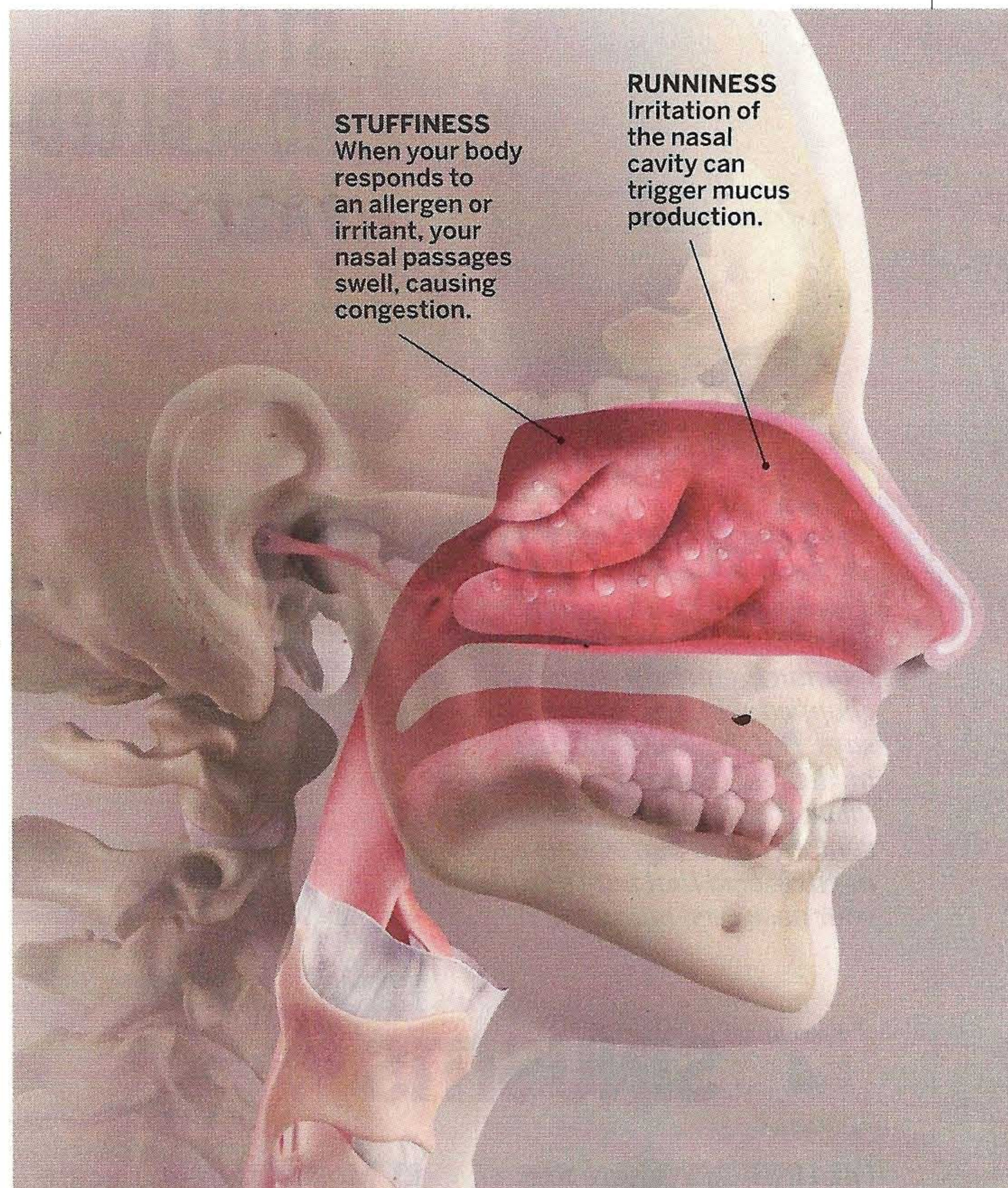
ALLERGIC RHINITIS

THE LOWDOWN You get this condition—an itchy, stuffy, runny nose triggered by allergies—when your immune system mistakes a harmless airborne substance for a threat. It launches a physical reaction, releasing chemicals called histamines that lead your body to mount an inflammatory response, resulting in those telltale symptoms. The most frequent trigger is pollen, but mold, dust mites and pet dander are common causes, too.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE An itchy, runny nose, often with sneezing. You may also have itchy, watery eyes.

RX Take an over-the-counter allergy medication,

like Zyrtec, Allegra or Claritin—you may need to experiment to see which one works best. For optimal results, start popping it before symptoms hit: in late August, if ragweed's your foe; spring, if tree and grass pollen is your issue; or just before you're about to face a known culprit, like a cat. If you have seasonal allergies, check pollen counts daily at pollen.com, and try to stay indoors with the AC on when they're high. Using a saline wash can also help. For more relief, see your doctor, who can prescribe antihistamine or steroid nasal sprays, as well as oral meds such as Singulair—or allergy shots, the longest-lasting treatment.



#1

That's where nose jobs land on the list of most popular facial cosmetic procedures in the United States. They're not just for teens: "I see a lot of women in their 30s and 40s who want to fix the tip, which gets thicker as you age and starts to drop due to cartilage weakness," says Sam Rizk, MD, a spokesperson for the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. The most requested celeb nose? Angelina Jolie's.

PROBLEM
No. 3

NONALLERGIC RHINITIS

THE LOWDOWN Have a chronic runny or stuffy nose? You may actually suffer from *this* condition, not allergies. It can get worse during your period or during pregnancy, since hormones can cause blood vessels to swell. Irritants, including smoke and cleaning solutions, can also lead to this problem. And postnasal drip can mean

you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

"When acid production irritates your esophagus, your nose can make mucus to protect your throat," Dr. Payne says.

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE A chronically blocked or runny nose, usually without the itchy eyes, nose or throat. If your symptoms are related to

GERD, you may also have frequent heartburn and a sore throat.

RX Use a nasal saline rinse three to four times a day; if that doesn't help, see your doctor for a prescription nasal steroid spray. He may also have you avoid certain triggers or test you for allergies, obstructions such as polyps or a deviated septum, or GERD.

ANATOMY OF AN ACHOO

What happens when you sneeze:

» Something irritates the lining of your nose, like dust or pollen.
» A tickling sensation in the nerve endings in your nose sends a message to your

brain that it needs to rid itself of a foreign substance.
» You involuntarily inhale, and air pressure builds in your lungs.
» You close your

eyes, your tongue presses against the roof of your mouth and suddenly your breath comes out fast through your nose. Gesundheit!





TISSUE TIP

Tissues made with a soothing lotion like aloe vera or vitamin E can help calm red, chapped skin, Dr. Payne says. But avoid purchasing medicated tissues or ones labeled “antiviral”—they can contain harsh ingredients such as citric acid that may irritate your nose even more.

STOP A NOSEBLEED—FAST

1 Spray a topical decongestant, like Afrin, into your nostril to shrink the blood vessels. Don't have one handy? Apply ice to your nose for two to three minutes.

2 Pinch your nostrils between your thumb and finger to send pressure to the bleeding point, stopping the flow.

3 Most nosebleeds end within 5 to 10 minutes. If you've been bleeding for 20 minutes or blood is going down your throat, call your doctor or head to the ER.



PROBLEM
No. 4

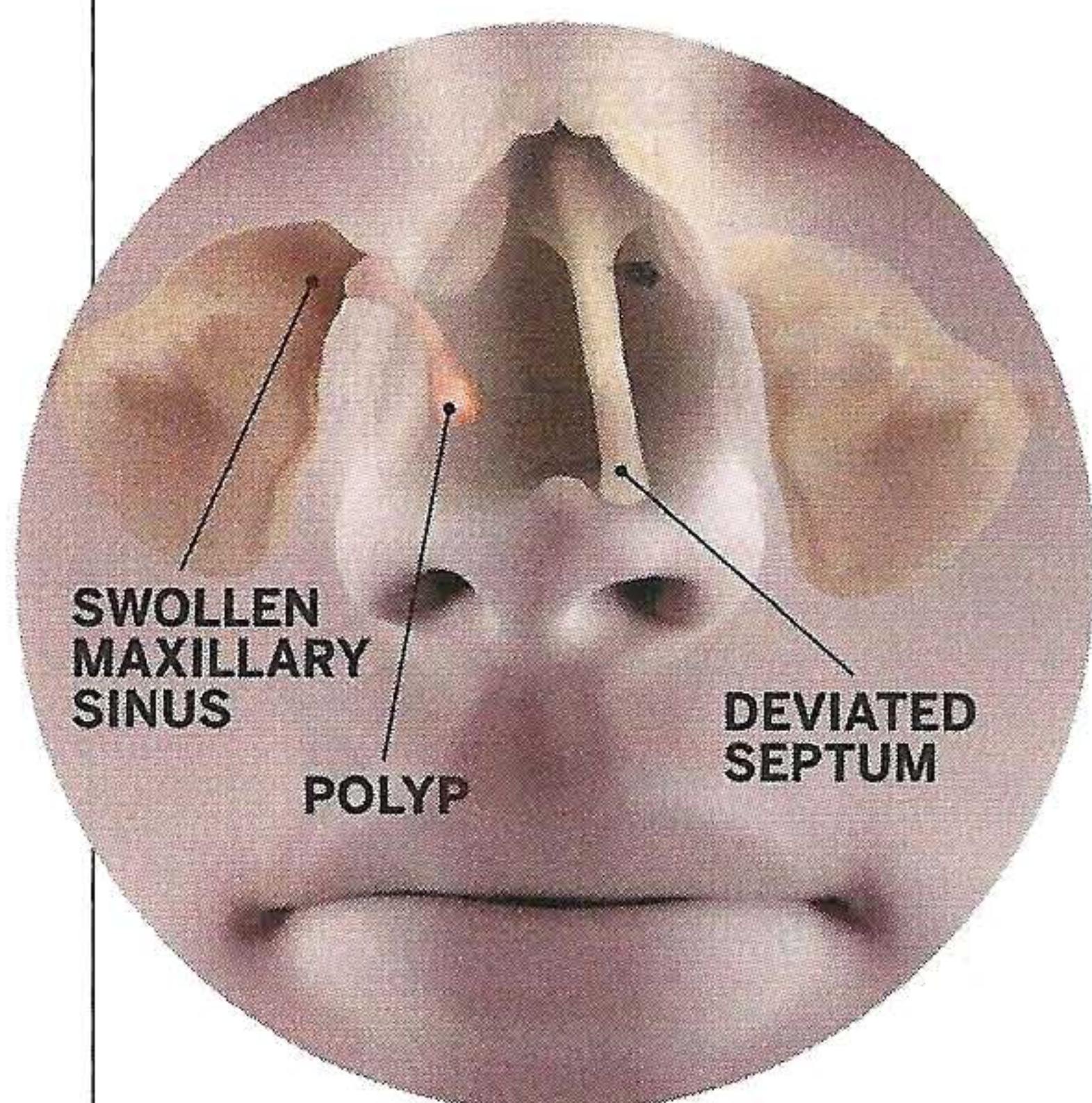
SINUSITIS

THE LOWDOWN There are two types of sinusitis, which is the swelling of sinuses and nasal passages: acute (you've had symptoms for less than a month) and chronic (you've had symptoms for more than three months).

WHAT IT FEELS LIKE A stuffy nose, facial pain, thick and discolored nasal drainage, postnasal drip, cough, head congestion, blocked ears and even headaches. If you have acute sinusitis, you may also have a fever.

RX Most of the time, acute sinusitis is caused by a virus and clears up on its own. “We usually don't prescribe antibiotics unless you've had a sinus infection for 10 to 14 days and your symptoms haven't improved, which suggests you may be developing a bacterial infection,” Dr. Dykewicz says.

But if it keeps recurring, you should see an allergist or ENT doctor, who can test for structural issues—like nasal polyps or a deviated septum—the first treatment, regardless of the cause, is usually saline and prescription steroid sprays. If symptoms don't improve after a month, you may need endoscopic sinus surgery to drain your sinuses and remove obstructions. It requires anesthesia and two to 10 days of recovery.



THE SCOOP ON NETI POTS

➔ Do they work? Yes, research shows. Saline irrigation systems can relieve congestion (though not as well as prescription sprays, one study found). An even better drugstore remedy: “A saline-spray squeeze bottle [such as NeilMed] is as effective and a lot easier to use,” notes Richard W. Weber, MD, professor of medicine at National Jewish Health in Denver. If you do neti, fill pots with distilled or sterile water and 1 teaspoon salt (or a saline packet). Wash them with soap and distilled water, then air-dry.

IS IT A COLD, ALLERGIES OR SINUS PROBLEMS?

The symptoms can be confusingly similar and even overlap. Follow this guide to help ID your problem—and see your doctor if you're still suffering after a week or two with no relief, Dr. Payne advises.

	COLD	ALLERGIES	SINUSITIS
Stuffed up?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Runny nose?	Yes, usually green or yellow mucus	Yes, usually clear	Yes, usually thick yellowish-green
Fever?	Sometimes, under 100° F	No	Sometimes
Itchy, watery eyes?	Maybe	Yes	No
Achy?	Sometimes	No	No
Facial pain and/or toothache?	No	No	Yes
Symptoms lasting more than a week to 10 days?	Usually no	Sometimes	Yes