

# Mucus and Phlegm

Both **phlegm** and **mucus** are **protective secretions** made by the body, but they differ in where they are produced, their consistency, and their function.

Mucus is a **thinner, slippery** secretion produced by the **mucous membranes** lining various parts of the body, including the nose, sinuses, throat, lungs, digestive tract, and urogenital tract. It is always present and acts as a **lubricant and protective barrier**. Mucus **keeps tissues moist and lubricated** (e.g., in the nasal passages and throat), **traps dust, allergens, and pathogens** to prevent them from entering deeper into the body and **contains enzymes, antibodies, and proteins that help fight infections**.

Phlegm is a type of mucus produced by the respiratory system, particularly in the **lungs and airways**. Most commonly noticed in the **nasal passages** (runny nose) or **throat** (post-nasal drip). It's **thicker** than regular mucus and is created to **trap and remove irritants such as dust, allergens, bacteria, and viruses** from the body. When you sing or speak, phlegm on the vocal cords can interfere with sound production, causing your voice to **sound hoarse, muffled, or strained**.

Excess phlegm and mucus can be uncomfortable and interfere with breathing, speaking, or singing. The goal is to thin the mucus, reduce its production, and help the body expel it naturally.

## Natural Remedies

### Stay Hydrated

Adequate hydration keeps mucus thin and easier to expel.

- Drink 8–10 glasses of water daily.
- Warm fluids (herbal teas, broths) are particularly effective as they soothe the throat and thin mucus.

### Steam Inhalation

Warm, moist air loosens mucus and clears airways.

- Boil water and pour it into a bowl.
- Cover your head with a towel, lean over the bowl, and inhale deeply for 5–10 minutes.

### Himalayan Saltwater Gargle

Salt has the natural ability to absorb. It is able to thin out and absorb excess mucus. A natural antiseptic and anti-inflammatory, salt is able to kill germs in the respiratory system.

- Dissolve 1/2 teaspoon of Himalayan salt in a glass of warm water.
- Gargle for 30 seconds, 2–3 times a day.

# Herbal Remedies

## Liquorice

Best used as a tea, liquorice root (not he sweets!) is anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory and breaks down phlegm (avoid if you have high blood pressure).

## Ginger

Anti-inflammatory and natural expectorant that breaks down mucus.

- Make fresh ginger tea with grated ginger, lemon juice, and honey.

## Thyme

A potent expectorant that clears mucus from the airways.

- Brew thyme tea or inhale its steam.

## Apple Cider Vinegar

The acidity breaks down mucus and prevents bacterial growth.

- Mix 1–2 teaspoons of ACV with warm water and honey.
- Drink it 1–2 times a day or gargle with it.

## Honey and Lemon

Honey coats the throat and soothes irritation, while lemon's acidity breaks down mucus.

- Mix 1 teaspoon of raw or Manuka honey with 1 teaspoon of fresh lemon juice in warm water.
- Sip slowly.

## Pineapple

Pineapple contains bromelain, an enzyme that reduces inflammation and breaks down mucus.

- Eat fresh pineapple
- Bromelain supplements are also available but speak with a nutritional therapist before supplementing to ensure the best quality products and to check any medical interactions.

## Peppermint

Contains menthol, which opens airways and reduces mucus.

- Sip peppermint tea

## Rest and Vocal Hygiene

And finally, remember, rest allows the body to recover and clear mucus naturally. Avoid straining your voice if you're congested to prevent additional irritation and work with a qualified singing teacher to ensure you are using your voice correctly and safely.

