Can holding a sneeze cause damage? [1]

Dear Alice,

Is it unhealthy to hold a sneeze? Does it affect the body in any harmful way?

Thank you for the help!

? Eudora

Answer

Dear Eudora,

Stifling a sneeze isn't a great idea. Sneezes serve a purpose: they expel things from your nose that the body would rather not hang onto, like dust, infected mucus, or pollen. Plus, sneezes pack a serious punch: particles expelled from the mouth during a sneeze have been clocked at more than 100 miles per hour! If you don't allow the pressure from a sneeze to come out of your nose and mouth like it's designed to, then that extra pressure is put elsewhere. You could potentially burst a blood vessel, fracture your nose, force air under your skin, or damage your sinuses or middle ear. You could also force infectious particles deep into the sinuses, spreading an infection.

So, it's best to let nature take its course and sneeze up a storm if your nose so desires. Dainty sniffs, mighty storms, singles, doubles, let 'em all out. While you're at it, your neighbors will appreciate it if you cover your nose and mouth!

Alice!

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