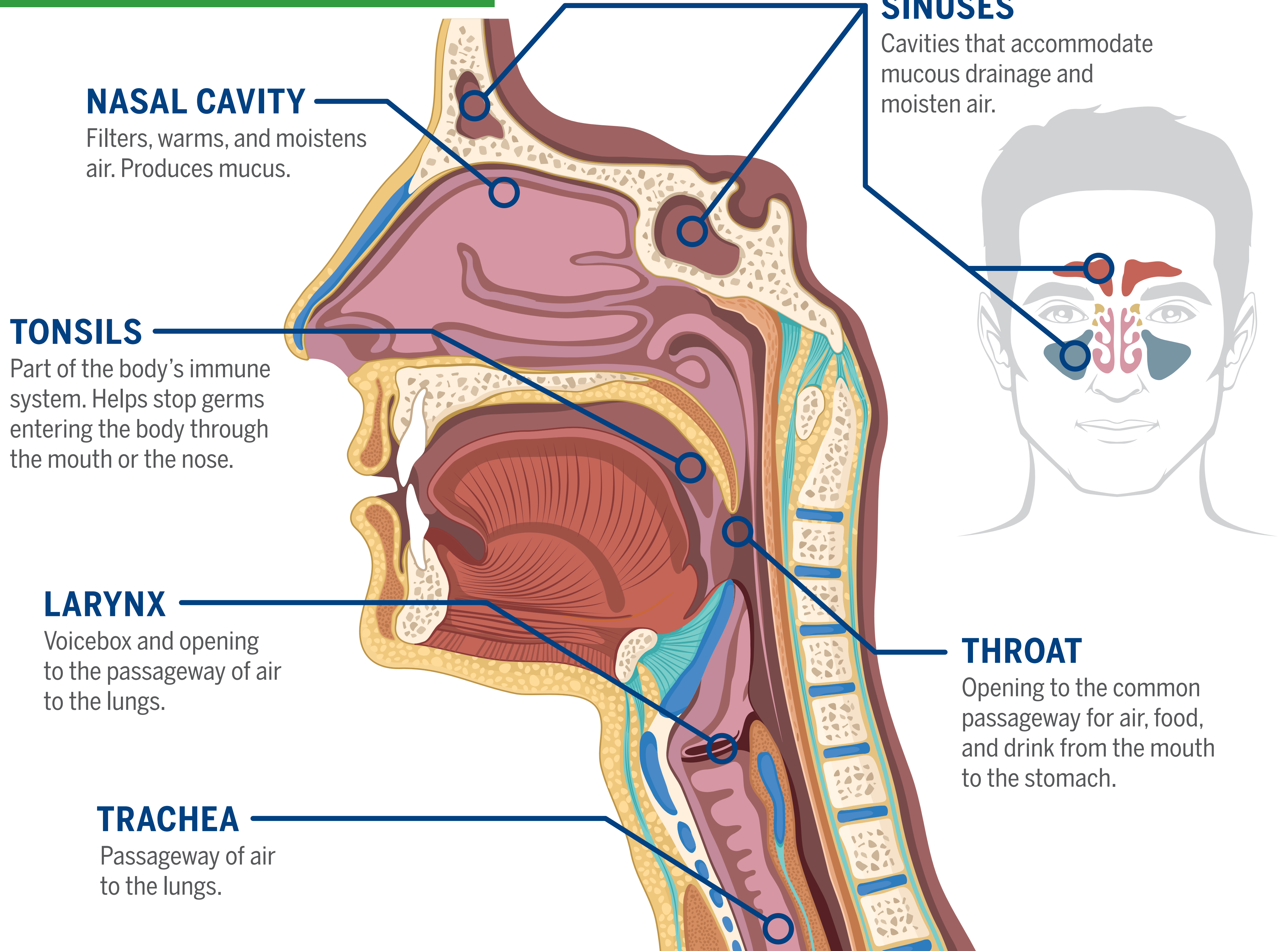


Common Infections of the Upper Respiratory Tract*

Common Infection Locations



Common Infection Types

Common cold/rhinosinusitis:

A viral infection of the nasal passages and sinuses that may cause runny nose, sneezing, pain, and congestion.

Croup:

A viral infection of the larynx and trachea that mostly occurs in children. Croup has a distinctive barking cough, and can cause fever, hoarseness, and labored breathing.

Influenza-like illness:

A viral infection of the nose and throat that causes fever plus cough and sore throat. Other symptoms may include sneezing, nausea, chills, headaches, and body aches.

Pharyngitis/tonsillitis:

A viral or bacterial infection of the pharynx and/or tonsils that causes fever, throat pain and redness, swelling, and difficulty swallowing.

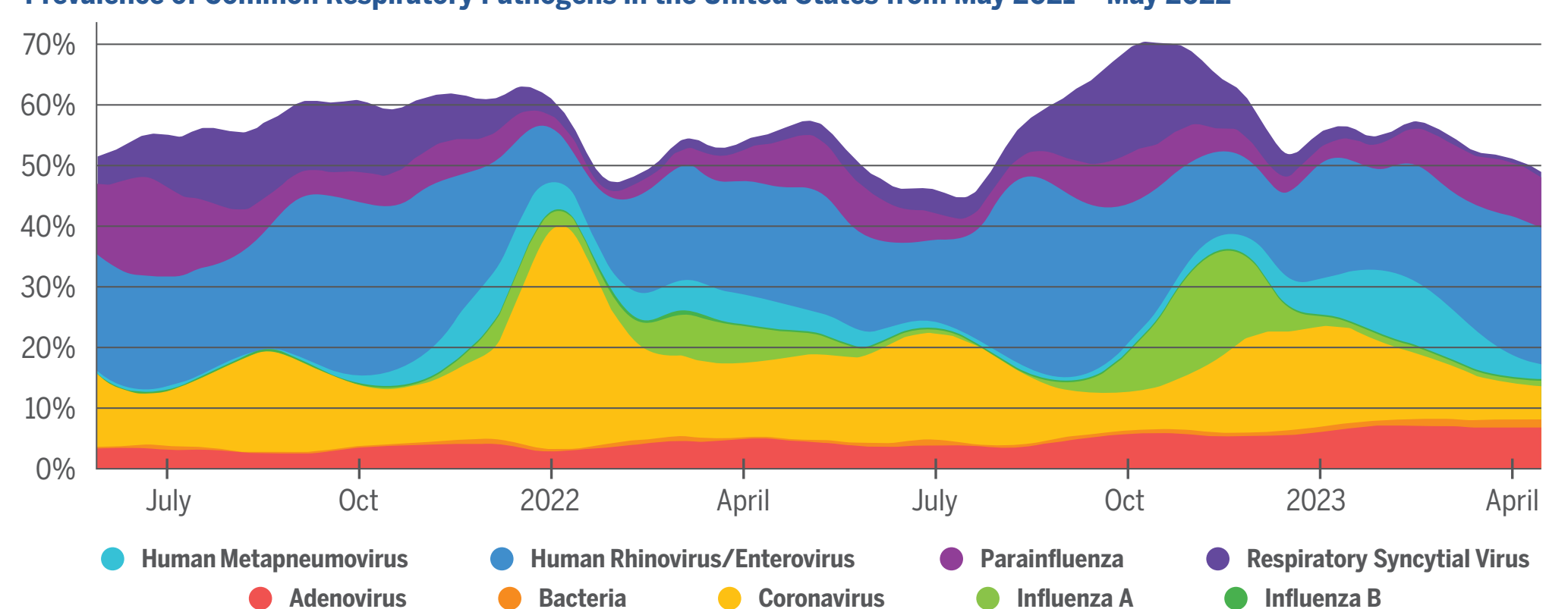
Whooping cough:

A bacterial infection that starts with symptoms similar to a common cold but may progress to cause coughing fits followed by a "whoop" sound as a person breathes in.

Common Respiratory Pathogens

Although many people suspect the flu, COVID-19, or RSV when they have a cough, respiratory infections are actually caused by dozens of viruses and bacteria. The chart below is an example of the most common respiratory bugs and how they circulate throughout the year.

Prevalence of Common Respiratory Pathogens in the United States from May 2021 – May 2022



As you can see, sometimes certain bugs are more common than others. To make things more complicated, lots of these bugs cause overlapping signs and symptoms. For example, a cough and runny nose are symptoms caused by more than 10 different viruses and bacteria. This makes knowing which viruses and/or bacteria are responsible for an illness tricky; but knowing the root cause is important so the proper treatment can be prescribed, which may include antibiotics for bacterial infections. For more information about respiratory infections, common bugs, and treatment, scan the QR code.

Scan to
learn more



*Not an exhaustive list of pathogens that cause respiratory infections. Pathogen relevance and likelihood of being the causative agent behind infection is subject to seasonal changes, location, patient demographics, and health status.
**References available on website. Scan for references.