

“I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made” (Ps. 139)



Sinus Inflammation

What are sinuses?

Sinuses are air-filled chambers in the bones around the nose. They make mucus, which cleans and moisturizes the nasal passages.

What causes sinus problems?

Inflammation in the sinuses causes swelling which blocks the openings from the sinuses so the mucus cannot drain out. It collects in the sinuses, causing pain & congestion. Also, the stagnant mucus provides a moist environment for bacteria to grow causing infection in the sinuses.

What causes the inflammation?

There can be a number of causes of the inflammation including: allergies, fungal infections, structural abnormalities such as nasal polyps, smoke & air pollution, certain diseases such as cystic fibrosis, immune system dysfunction, non-allergic rhinitis, and more.

What are the symptoms?

Acute sinusitis: nasal congestion, facial pain or pressure, drainage of thick, yellow or greenish discharge from the nose or down the back of the throat, headache and/or pain in the upper teeth & jaw or ear pain, fatigue and not feeling well. Acute sinusitis often follows a cold. If the symptoms last longer than 10 days or get worse, there may be a bacterial infection present. Antibiotics may be needed at this point.

Chronic sinusitis (lasts for 12 weeks without going away): symptoms are more subtle & may include congestion and drainage down the back of the throat, less facial pain, and generally one doesn't feel as sick. There may be headache and loss of smell.

What is the treatment?

Acute sinusitis: If symptoms persist 10 days or more, see your doctor.

Chronic sinusitis: Short-term use of corticosteroids, nasal corticosteroid sprays, nasal irrigation, allergy treatments (if they are the cause), surgery for obstructions if present. All of these treatments must be ordered by a physician.

How can sinus problems be prevented?

Keep the passageways of the sinuses open and mucus flowing by :

- Using nonprescription nasal sprays or oral decongestants (use only for 3 days to prevent rebound effect of making congestion worse)
- Using saline (salt solution) spray. Available over-the-counter and is not harmful. Can be used frequently.
- Using prescription medicated sprays, particularly if allergies are present
- Breathing steam from a bowl of hot water or hot shower
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid alcohol, smoking and air pollution

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Reference: Mayo Clinic Health Letter, Vol. 27, No. 1, Jan. 2009