

What else should I discuss with my healthcare professional?

Current health concerns

- Any symptoms not related to my sinuses
- Illnesses for which another healthcare professional is treating or has treated me

Current medications and supplements

- Antibiotics I have taken recently
- Allergies or adverse reactions I've had to medications
- Other prescription medications I am taking, such as steroids, heart medications, diabetes medications
- Over-the-counter medications such as NSAIDs
- Concerns about possible side effects
- The best way to take my medications
- How my diet may affect my medications
- Herbal supplements, or vitamins I'm taking

Lifestyles

- Changes in my diet
- Changes in my sleep patterns
- Upcoming travel plans
- My pregnancy

Tips on taking care of sinusitis

- Get plenty of rest. Lying down can make your sinuses feel more stopped-up, so try lying on the side that lets you breathe the best. You can prop yourself up with a pillow.
- Sip hot liquids and drink plenty of fluids.
- Apply moist heat by holding a warm, wet towel against your face or breathing in steam through a cloth or towel. This will relieve sinus pressure and help open your sinus passages.
- Add humidity to your living quarters by using a humidifier or vaporizer.
- Talk with your doctor before using an over-the-counter cold medicine. Some cold medicines can make your symptoms worse or cause other problems.
- Don't use a nasal spray with a decongestant in it for more than 3 days. If you use it for more than 3 days, the swelling in your sinuses may get worse when you stop using the medicine.
- Avoid alcohol, which can worsen swelling in the sinuses.

Written by familydoctor.org editorial staff

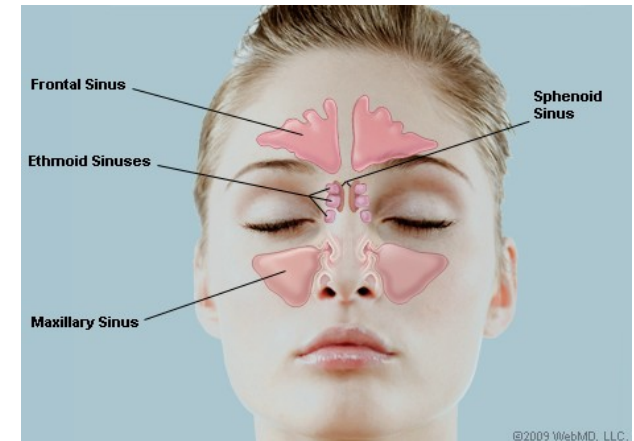
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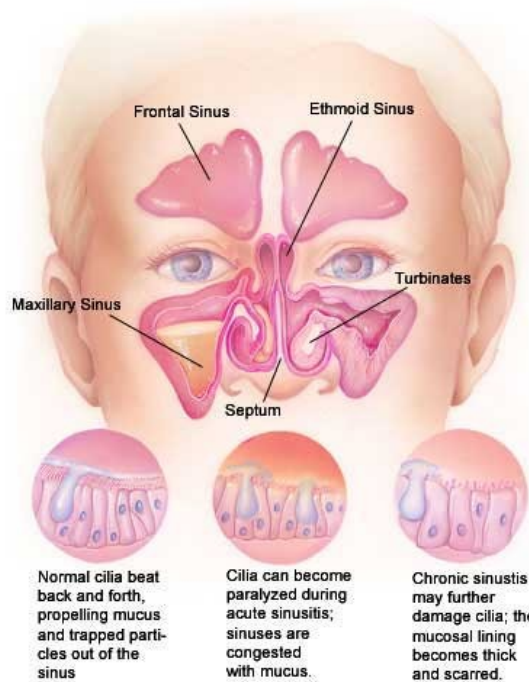
SINUSITIS



Sinusitis is inflammation of the paranasal sinuses, which may be due to infection, allergy or autoimmune issues. Most cases are due to a viral infection and resolve over the course of 10 days. It is a common condition with more than 24 million cases occurring in the United States annually.

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Sinusitis



Sinuses are the air chambers in the bone behind your cheeks, eyebrows and jaw. They make mucus, a fluid that cleans bacteria and other particles out of the air you breathe. Tiny hairs called cilia (“sill-ee-ah”) sweep mucus out of your sinuses so it can drain out through your nose.

What is sinusitis?

Sinusitis (“sine-you-site-iss”) is the name for a condition in which the lining of your sinuses become inflamed.

What causes sinusitis?

Anything that causes swelling in your sinuses or keeps the cilia from moving mucus can cause sinusitis.

This can occur because of changes in temperature or air pressure. Allergies can cause sinusitis. Using decongestant nasal sprays too much, smoking, swimming or diving can also increase your risk of getting sinusitis. Some people have growths called polyps (say: “pawl-ips”) that block their sinus passages and cause sinusitis.

When sinusitis is caused by a bacterial or viral infection, you get a sinus infection. Sinus infections sometimes occur after you’ve had a cold. The cold virus attacks the lining of your sinuses, causing them to swell and become narrow. Your body responds to the virus by producing more mucus, but it gets blocked in your swollen sinuses. This built-up mucus is a good place for bacteria to grow. The bacteria can cause a sinus infection.



What are the symptoms of sinusitis?

The symptoms include:

- Pain or pressure in the forehead, cheeks, nose and between the eyes
- Headache
- Fever
- Nasal congestion
- Reduced sense of smell and taste
- Cough, which may be worse at night
- Bad breath (called halitosis)
- An ache in the teeth

How is acute sinusitis treated?

Treatment for sinusitis depends on the cause. Various Over-The-Counter medications may help relieve your symptoms.

You can use a saline nasal spray, which will clean out your nasal passages and help clear congestion. Your doctor may recommend a prescription nasal spray that helps treat inflammation.

Saline sinus rinses often bring relief to patients with chronic sinus or rhinitis problems. There are several different commercial products available (i.e. Neti Pot), that you may use.

If you have sinus pain or pressure, a decongestant may help your sinuses drain. Decongestants are generally only recommended for short-term use.

Over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (i.e. Tylenol) and ibuprofen (i.e. Advil, Motrin) can ease headache and sinus pain.

If your case of sinusitis is very severe and your doctor thinks the cause is bacterial, he or she may prescribe an antibiotic. You may take an antibiotic for 10 to 14 days, but you will usually start feeling better a couple of days after you start taking it. It is important to take antibiotics exactly as your doctor tells you and to continue taking it until it is completely gone, even after you’re feeling better.

If allergies are causing your sinusitis, your doctor may treat the allergy. Then the sinusitis will usually clear up on its own.

