



My Health
Digest

Sinusitis

Sinusitis is an inflammation or swelling of the tissue lining the sinuses. Sinuses are hollow spaces within the bones between your eyes, behind your cheekbones, and in your forehead. They make mucus, which keeps the inside of your nose moist. That, in turn, helps protect against dust, allergens, and pollutants.

Healthy sinuses are filled with air. But when they become blocked and filled with fluid, germs can grow and cause an infection.

Conditions that can cause sinus blockage include:

- The common cold
- Allergic rhinitis, which is swelling of the lining of the nose caused by allergens
- Small growths in the lining of the nose called nasal polyps
- A deviated septum, which is a shift in the nasal cavity

Types

Acute sinusitis usually starts with cold-like symptoms such as a runny, stuffy nose and facial pain. It may start suddenly and last 2 to 4 weeks.

Subacute sinusitis usually lasts 4 to 12 weeks.

Chronic sinusitis symptoms last 12 weeks or longer.

Recurrent sinusitis happens several times a year.

Causes

It's more likely if you have:

- Swelling inside the nose like from a common cold
- Blocked drainage ducts
- Structural differences that narrow those ducts
- Nasal polyps
- Immune system deficiencies or medications that suppress the immune system

For children, things that can cause sinusitis include:

- Allergies
- Illnesses from other kids at day care or school
- Pacifiers
- Bottle drinking while lying on the back
- Smoke in the environment

The main things that make sinusitis more likely for adults are infections and smoking.



Acute Sinusitis Symptoms

The main signs include:

- Facial pain or pressure
- "Stuffed-up" nose
- Runny nose
- Loss of smell
- Cough or congestion

You may also have:

- Fever
- Bad breath
- Fatigue
- Dental pain

Chronic Sinusitis Symptoms

You may have these symptoms for 12 weeks or more:

- A feeling of congestion or fullness in your face
- A nasal obstruction or nasal blockage
- Pus in the nasal cavity
- Fever
- Runny nose or discolored postnasal drainage

You may also have headaches, bad breath, and tooth pain. You may feel tired a lot.

Lots of things can cause symptoms like these. You'll need to see your doctor to find out if you have sinusitis.



Treatment of sinusitis

If you have a simple sinus infection, your doctor may recommend you use a decongestant and saline nasal washes. You shouldn't use an over-the-counter decongestant for more than 3 days, though, because it can make you more congested.

You may want to try another over-the-counter option - a bioelectric device that emits micro-current waves. The device is placed on the face and emits painless vibrations to help clear sinus congestion.

If your doctor gives you antibiotics, you'll probably take them for 10 to 14 days. The symptoms usually disappear with treatment.

Warm, moist air may help if you have chronic sinusitis. You can use a vaporizer, or you can inhale steam from a pan of warm water. Make sure the water isn't too hot.

There are some other things you can do yourself to help with chronic sinusitis:

Warm compresses can ease pain in the nose and sinuses.

Drink plenty of fluids to keep mucus thin.

Saline nose drops are safe to use at home.

Over-the-counter decongestant drops or sprays can help. Don't take them longer than recommended.

Other options to avoid sinusitis

You also need to avoid any triggers linked to your sinusitis.

If you have allergies, your doctor may recommend an antihistamine.

If a fungus is to blame, you'll get a prescription for an antifungal medicine.

If you have certain immune deficiencies, your doctor may give you immunoglobulin, which helps fight the things your body reacts to.

