

## DESCRIPTION

Infection or inflammation (redness and soreness) of the sinuses. Sinuses are air-filled spaces that make mucus to help clean the air we breathe. They are located behind the eyebrows, inside each cheekbone, and between the eyes. Sinuses open into the nose for mucus and air exchange. Sinusitis can be acute (short illness), or chronic if it continues for several weeks or recurs often.

## FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Nasal congestion with white or greenish-yellow or blood-tinged discharge.
- Feeling of pressure inside the head or behind the eyes.
- Headache that is worse in the morning or when bending forward.
- Cheek pain that may resemble a toothache.
- Post-nasal drip.
- Cough (sometimes) that is usually non-productive.
- Fever (sometimes).
- Swelling of the tissue inside the nose.

## CAUSES

- Bacterial infection. A common cold or allergic reaction can cause the sinuses to swell and increase the amount of mucus they produce. Bacteria begin to grow in the excess mucus in the swollen sinuses and cause the symptoms.
- Fungal infection, such as aspergillosis, may occur in people who have a weakened immune system.
- Allergies that cause swelling of sinuses.

## RISK INCREASES WITH

- Common cold or other viral illness.
- A weakened immune system due to illness or drugs.
- Swimming or diving.
- Using nasal decongestant sprays too often.
- Growths (polyps) in the nose or a deviated septum.
- People with asthma or an allergic disease.
- Smoking.
- Dental problems.

## GENERAL MEASURES

- Apply moist heat to relieve pain in the sinuses and nose.
- Take a warm shower once or twice a day and use a humidifier at night.
- Use of a neti pot may help relieve symptoms.

## MEDICATIONS

- For minor pain, you may use acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen. Do NOT give aspirin to a child.
- In some cases your doctor may prescribe a nasal steroid. (Follow the directions carefully)
- Antibiotics or oral steroids may also be prescribed.
  - ↳ Unless your doctor tells you differently, always finish the full course of your antibiotic and steroid prescriptions, even if you start to feel better.
  - ↳ Antibiotics and steroids may interfere with the effectiveness of birth control pills. Use an alternative method of contraception for the remainder of the month after finishing your antibiotic or steroid prescription.
- To help alleviate your symptoms, your doctor recommends using an over-the-counter:
  - Oral Decongestant
  - Nasal Decongestant (Limit use to 3 days in a row)
  - Oral Antihistamine
  - Saline Nasal Spray
  - Mucolytic (Such as Guaifenesin)

## SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

Symptoms do not improve in a week or the following occur during treatment:

- Fever; bleeding from the nose; severe headache.
- Swelling of the face (forehead, eyes, side of the nose, or cheek).