

Title: The Facts About Sinusitis

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Abstract:

In acute uncomplicated sinusitis, intranasal corticosteroids have been shown to provide symptom relief and improve clinical outcomes. There is also no evidence that their use as monotherapy or as an adjuvant therapy would be detrimental in therapeutic doses, however, the data does not provide information regarding the optimal dose and/or duration of treatment.

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The Facts about Sinus Infections

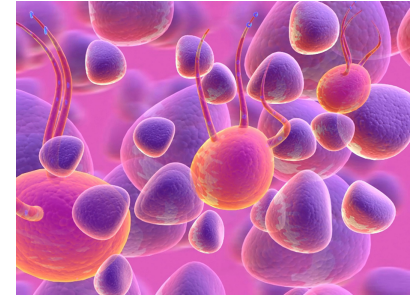
Background: Sinus problems affect approximately 30-35 million Americans each year. It remains one of the most common reasons for primary care visits and accounts for significant time off of work and school. While we tend to think about sinusitis as a bacterial infection, it is important to remember that this disease is frequently caused by a virus. Current research suggests that only 2% of upper

respiratory infections are complicated by bacterial infection and will often resolve without antibiotic treatment.

What are sinuses?

The body has four pairs of sinuses located throughout the skull. These sinuses serve to lighten the skull, as well as humidify and heat the air we breathe through our nose. The sinuses are lined by the same membrane found in our nose and are connected by small holes to our nasal cavity. Normally our nose and sinuses produce between a pint and a quart of mucus each day. The mucus passes through the nasal cavity picking up dirt, allergens, and bacteria along the way before being swallowed into the stomach. Most people don't notice this mucus flow because it is a normal bodily function. In this way the sinuses help to remove many of the irritants that can cause inflammation within the upper airway.

What are the signs and symptoms of a sinus infection?



Sinus infections can be divided into two types, acute (severe) and chronic (persistent) sinusitis.

The symptoms of acute sinusitis are:

- **Green/yellow nasal discharge**
- **Facial pressure around the cheeks, eyes, and forehead**
- **Swelling of the face**
- **High fever (102°F and above)**
- **Upper molar tooth pain**

The symptoms of chronic sinusitis are:

- **Nasal congestion/nosebleed**
- **Headaches**
- **Chronic sore throat/cough**
- **Low grade fever (101°F or less)**
- **Decreased sense of smell**

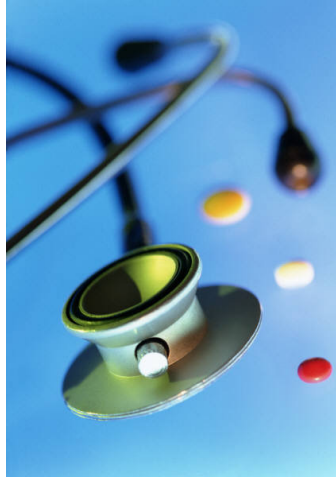
Diagnosis and Treatment



What causes a sinus infection?

When the openings from the sinuses into the nasal cavity become plugged sinus pressure develops and mucus fails to drain. These blockages can be caused by a number of different things including: infections, irritants, physical obstruction, and allergies. When the openings in the sinuses cannot drain, the tissue in the nose and sinuses swells and can slow down or even stop mucus drainage. If the mucus cannot drain it builds up causing pressure in those areas and provides a good environment for bacteria to grow.

Before starting treatment, your doctor will take a complete history and perform a physical examination.



Acute sinusitis usually requires antibiotic treatment with or without a combination of decongestants, antihistamines, saline rinses, and nasal steroids. Chronic sinusitis may need long-term treatment (8 weeks or more) for maximum effectiveness. It is important to remember that each patient is different and no one treatment is right for everyone. Be sure to discuss with your doctor what treatment is right for you.



Sinus surgery

Sinus surgery should only be considered if maximal medical therapy has been attempted and failed or if there is an anatomical defect that medication cannot treat. When surgery is needed, an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor can choose from a number of different surgical procedures depending on the severity of the sinus disease.