

# Sinusitis



## What Is Sinusitis?

Sinusitis happens when the tissue that lines the sinuses becomes irritated and swollen. Sometimes sinusitis is called sinus infection. Sinuses are small spaces in the cheekbones and forehead. They make mucus, which drains into the nose. Sinusitis can be caused by allergies, the common cold, or other infections. You may be more likely to get sinusitis if you:

- Have allergies or asthma
- Smoke
- Have gone swimming recently
- Have been on a plane recently



## What Are the Warning Signs of Sinusitis?

- Pressure and pain in the face
- Stuffy nose and postnasal drip
- Yellow or green mucus from your nose
- Ear pressure
- Headache or pain when moving your head or bending over
- Tooth pain
- Hard to taste or smell
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Feeling tired
- Fever



## How Is Sinusitis Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and examine you.

- If you have had symptoms for less than a week, you usually do not need antibiotics.
- If you have had symptoms for at least 10 days, you might have an infection. This happens when mucus does not drain and causes bacteria to grow. You may need an antibiotic to help your body fight the bacteria.



## How Is Sinusitis Treated?

You can help your symptoms by:

- Resting and drinking plenty of fluids.
- Using a saline spray or flushing your sinuses with a sinus rinse kit.
- Taking over-the-counter medicines. Ask your doctor what medicines are best for your symptoms.

If your doctor thinks that you have an infection, antibiotics may be prescribed. It is important to take antibiotics only when you really need them. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them can cause side effects. It can also make the antibiotic not work as well when you really need it.

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## Questions for My Doctor?

- Do I need to take antibiotics?
- How long will it take until I feel better?
- What can I do to help my symptoms?
- Are nose drops or sprays from the drug store safe to use?
- Should I use a nasal rinse?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent this in the future?



## Bottom Line

- Sinusitis happens when the tissue lining the sinuses become irritated and swollen. This can be caused by the common cold, allergies, or sometimes infections.
- Things that increase risk for sinusitis include allergies or asthma, smoking, and air travel.
- Symptoms include facial and tooth pain, headache, ear pressure, stuffy nose, and fever.
- Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and give a physical exam.
- Treatments include resting, drinking fluids, and using a saline spray. Over-the-counter medicines can also help.
- If you have a sinus infection, your doctor will prescribe an antibiotic. It's important to only take antibiotics when you really need them.

## For More Information

- **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease**  
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov.proxy1.lib.tju.edu/topics/sinusitis/>
- **MedlinePlus:** [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sinusitis.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/sinusitis.html)
- **American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology**  
[www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/At-a-glance/sinusitis.asp](http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/At-a-glance/sinusitis.asp)

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