



### **ACUTE AND CHRONIC SINUSITIS**

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Sinusitis is inflammation of the nasal sinuses typically caused by an infection. It can be acute or chronic. The inflammation prevents proper drainage of the mucus and bacteria grow in the sinus cavity.

Causes of sinusitis can include allergies, changes in baropressure, structural abnormalities in the sinuses, nasal polyps, and nasal septal deviation. Symptoms can include headache, fever, discolored nasal discharge, tooth pain, fatigue, post nasal drip, decreased sense of smell, cough or a bad taste in the mouth. Chronic sinusitis often is associated with similar but less severe symptoms.

A thorough history and physical examination is usually all that is needed to make a diagnosis but at times a sinus x-ray or CT scan may be necessary. Abnormalities such as nasal polyps or cysts may be seen on an x-ray or CT scan. Allergies can be an underlying cause of chronic inflammation and long term treatment of the allergies can greatly reduce the risk of developing sinusitis.

Antibiotics are needed to treat a bacterial infection. Other medications useful in treating the swelling and inflammation include decongestants, antihistamines, and topical nasal corticosteroids. Never use over the counter nasal sprays like Afrin for more than 2-3 days. Saline washes in the nose are helpful in promoting the drainage of mucus. Mix one cup of warm water with 1/3 teaspoon of salt and squirt the solution into the nose with a bulb syringe.

Sinus surgery may be necessary in patients who do not respond adequately to medical treatment or in people who have nasal polyps or a deviated septum.