

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ACUTE SINUSITIS

In the Clinic
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What is acute sinusitis?

- Acute sinusitis, also known as a sinus infection or rhinosinusitis, refers to inflammation and infection in one or more of the paranasal sinuses.
- It often occurs after a cold, when mucus gets trapped in inflamed sinuses and does not drain properly. This condition encourages bacterial growth, or rarely fungal growth, that can lead to infection.
- Sinusitis affects is one of the most common reasons people visit the doctor.
- It is acute when in the early stages, from 1 to 4 weeks after symptoms start. Subacute or chronic sinusitis has symptoms that last longer than 1 month.

Who gets it?

- Anyone can get sinusitis, but it is more common in very young people and elderly people.
- People with nasal allergies or asthma have an increased risk for sinusitis.
- Smoking, swimming, air travel, and dental problems are factors that increase risk for sinusitis.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Symptoms include a headache, congestion with pus in the nose, facial pressure and pain, postnasal drip, cough, sore throat, and fatigue.
- A fever lasting more than 3 to 4 days is suggestive of a bacterial infection.

What is the difference between a cold and acute sinusitis?

- A cold is caused by a virus and usually lasts about 1 week. Persons with symptoms of acute sinusitis for less than 1 week are still usually only infected with a virus.
- Acute bacterial sinusitis generally occurs after symptoms have persisted for 7 to 10 days.

How do you know if you have acute sinusitis?

- Your doctor will make the diagnosis based on your symptoms and a physical examination.
- In complicated, severe, or persistent cases, x-rays or computed tomography may be needed. A sample of sinus fluid may need to be obtained by a specialist to identify the exact strain of bacteria causing the sinusitis.

How is it treated?

- Resting, drinking plenty of fluids, and using a saline spray or neti pot can reduce symptoms.
- Decongestants, antihistamines, and other over-the-counter medications may also reduce symptoms.
- Antibiotics may be prescribed if your doctor believes your symptoms and the duration of the disease warrant this treatment.

For More Information

<https://aaaai.org/patients/topicofthethmonth/1206/>
Sinusitis FAQs from the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/dolHaveSinusitis.cfm
Fact Sheet: Do I Have Sinusitis? From the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/sinusitis/>
Information on sinusitis from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease.

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