

Sinusitis (Sinus Infection)

What is it?

Sinusitis is an infection of the sinuses, which can be the after-effect of the common cold, allergies, cigarette smoke, an infected tooth, nasal deformity, or even a foreign object in the nose. Any of these may cause a block in the sinuses in which bacteria may grow, causing the infection.

Symptoms

The symptoms of a sinus infection vary from patient to patient, but can include a combination of the following:

- ✓ Runny nose, often with yellow or green discharge
- ✓ Irritation, tickling and/or drainage in the throat
- ✓ Swelling and/or tenderness around the eyes
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Fever

Diagnosis

Because the symptoms of sinusitis can closely mimic other ailments, it's important to see your physician for an accurate diagnosis. In addition to listening carefully to your symptoms, and asking questions, your physician may perform the following imaging and/or lab tests to make a diagnosis:

- ✓ Physical examination
- ✓ Sinus culture
- ✓ Sinus X-ray or computed tomography (CT) scan

To gain an accurate diagnosis, it is important that you clearly and carefully describe your symptoms to your physician.

Treatments

Once your physician has diagnosed a sinus infection, and determined a cause, he or she will recommend a treatment plan to ease symptoms and address the root issue.



Most treatment plans will include a combination of the following, depending on the root cause of the sinusitis:

- ✓ Antibiotics
- ✓ Analgesics for pain management (DO NOT give aspirin to a child with a fever, as this may cause Reyes syndrome)
- ✓ Smoking cessation (for adults) or avoidance of second-hand smoke (for children)
- ✓ Surgical removal of the adenoids
- ✓ Endoscopic sinus surgery
- ✓ A cool mist humidifier to ease nasal irritation

If your sinusitis is recurring and allergy-related, your physician may recommend treatment by an allergist or immunologist once the current infection is gone.

Helpful Hints

- ✓ Do not take an antihistamine for your sinus infection unless recommended by your physician; if your sinusitis is not allergy-related, an antihistamine will not help.
- ✓ For any antibiotic therapy to be effective, it must be taken as per the physician's instructions. If these instructions are unclear, please consult your physician.

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Rochester Medical Group
3950 S. Rochester Road, Suite 1200
Rochester Hills, MI 48307
Phone (248) 844-6000

- ✓ It is also important to **complete** the recommended antibiotic therapy, even if symptoms recede and you are feeling better.