

Acute sinusitis (adults)

Sinuses are cavities in our face bones that open up into the nose. Viral infections, such as the common cold, can cause the lining of the nose to swell, blocking the small opening from the sinuses to the nose. Fluid inside the sinuses may build up, which can make you feel bunged up and stuffy. Sinusitis can be acute (resolving within 12 weeks) or chronic (lasting longer than 12 weeks). The most common symptoms include a blocked or runny nose, pain and tenderness in the face, and a raised body temperature. The symptoms of sinusitis usually get better on their own without treatment. Antibiotics are unlikely to help unless the symptoms are severe.

What can I expect to happen?

- Duration: The symptoms of acute sinusitis last longer than the common cold and take about 2 ½ weeks to clear. Chronic sinusitis may last for months.
- Need for treatment: In most people, sinusitis will get better without treatment, and about two thirds of people with sinusitis won't need to see their GP.

Treatment

- Simple measures: Rest, applying warm face packs and washing out the nose with a steady stream of saline solution (available from your pharmacy) may help relieve your symptoms.
- Fluids and food: Drink plenty of fluids to replace those lost from sweating and a runny nose. Get some rest until you feel better – we usually know when we're well enough to return to normal activities. Eat healthily, including at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Over the counter medicines: Paracetamol, ibuprofen or aspirin can help reduce the symptoms of sinusitis. Avoid giving aspirin to children under the age of 16 and follow the manufacturer's instructions. A decongestant preparation for your nose (for a maximum of one week) can help if a blocked nose is the problem.
- Not recommended: Complementary and alternative medicines, steam inhalation, and drugs such as antihistamines, mucolytics and steroids are currently not recommended.

When should I seek medical help?

Contact your GP surgery for urgent advice if you notice one or more of the following:

- You develop a high temperature (above 39°C or 102.2°F), which can be a sign of a more serious type of infection;
- You're confused or disorientated;
- You feel really unwell;
- You're at high risk of complications because you suffer other medical conditions;
- You suffer severe pain or discomfort in your face;
- Your nose produces lots of thick green/yellow fluid.

Patient Info <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Sinusitis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

NHS Choices <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sinusitis-sinus-infection/>