

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Don't Suffer with Sinusitis, Seek Medical Treatment

Sinusitis is the most common chronic medical condition in the United States today. It affects more than 37 million Americans and leads to debilitating pain and a decline in their quality of life. The prevalence of sinusitis has soared in the last decade due to increased pollution, urban sprawl, and increased resistance to antibiotics. Many patients with sinusitis believe that they are suffering from recurring colds or allergies when, in fact, they have a condition that may be successfully treated with antibiotics or surgery.

Symptoms of acute sinusitis include facial pain/pressure, nasal congestion, discolored nasal drainage, diminished sense of smell, and occasionally a cough. Additionally, sufferers could incur fever, bad breath, fatigue, and tooth pain. Acute sinusitis can often last four weeks or more.

Other conditions that can cause similar symptoms include allergic rhinitis, septal deviation, and nasal polyps. Your doctor will determine the cause of your symptoms by performing a thorough history as well as a detailed physical examination. Should sinusitis be the cause of your nasal complaints, treatment initially includes decongestants and antibiotics. Often a physician will prescribe nasal steroid sprays and/or antihistamines. Should you continue to have difficulties, a referral to an otolaryngologist (ear, nose, and throat doctor) will allow for a more thorough examination.

In severe cases of sinusitis where antibiotics are not effective, surgery may be necessary to enlarge the natural openings to the sinuses and remove any obstruction. Most patients are back to their daily routine within one week; complete healing of the sinuses often requires several weeks.

Untreated sinusitis often results in unnecessary pain and discomfort. In rare cases, an untreated infection can also spread to other areas of the body, including the brain and eye. If you suffer from sinus pain, consult your healthcare provider.



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