

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Cold, Allergy, or Sinusitis?

Is that "cold" lingering endlessly? Do your "seasonal allergies" seem to be with you year-round? If you answered yes, you may be one of the 37 million Americans affected by sinusitis, an inflammation of the membrane lining the sinus.

Many individuals with sinusitis assume they have a cold or an allergy because the upper respiratory symptoms are similar. Unfortunately, sinusitis can reoccur on a regular basis. In addition, studies show that individuals with sinusitis report more pain, depression, and fatigue than persons who do not suffer from sinusitis.

Suspect sinusitis if you have symptoms of an upper respiratory infection that last more than 10 days and these symptoms are accompanied by facial pain, yellow or green nasal discharge, and post-nasal drip.

Chronic sinusitis (having sinusitis more than four times per year) can lead to debilitating pain and reduced quality of life. Therefore, if at-home treatments don't clear up your sinusitis or returns repeatedly, consult with your primary care physician or otolaryngologist (ear, nose, and throat specialist). He or she will determine if you have sinusitis, or another sinus condition, and/or medical problem.

The American Academy of Otolaryngology reminds the elderly to be especially aware of the danger of mixing medications and to discuss any medications—both prescription and over-the-counter—that they are taking with their physician.

Children with sinusitis may have different symptoms than adults. Coughing, bad breath, crankiness, and swelling around the eyes often accompany yellow or greenish discharge in children with sinusitis.

In severe cases of sinusitis, your physician may recommend endoscopic surgery to open your sinus passages and allow drainage.



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