

Sinusitis

Each person has specific toxic exposures along with dietary and genetic weaknesses that are causing their symptoms. Toxic exposures can be inorganic like heavy metals, DDT, VOC's, Radio-active waste and any other chemical like food additives or pesticides and fertilizers sprayed on the foods. They can also be organic or living organisms like parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi. All the different possible combinations make it difficult to accurately address issues unless you have experienced medical professionals mapping through all your different clinical symptoms.

Dr. Marilyn Tucker founded The Vibrant Health Community to do Symptom Mapping to be able to bring a completely personalized plan for each person. When you join the Vibrant Health Community you have your own medical team of doctor, pharmacist and health coach. This Team specializes in Integrative-Complementary Medicine. They will work with your personal physician to bring you to a place of as much natural healing as your body will allow. For those of you that have health issues that require prescription medications, your Team can help introduce natural measures that can reduce the imbalances and complications that inevitably come with prescription medication. This can reduce side effects and possible additional drugs having to be introduced.

Definition

Sinusitis refers to inflammation of the sinuses. This is generally caused by a viral, bacterial, or fungal infection.

The sinuses are air-filled spaces in the skull (behind the forehead, cheeks, and eyes) that are lined with mucous membranes. Healthy sinuses are sterile (meaning that they contain no bacteria or other organisms) and open, allowing mucus to drain and air to circulate.

When inflamed, the sinuses become blocked with mucus and can become infected. Each year, over 30 million adults and children get sinusitis.

Sinusitis can be acute (lasting anywhere from 2 - 8 weeks) or chronic, with symptoms lingering much longer.

Alternative Names

Acute sinusitis; Sinus infection; Sinusitis - acute

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Sinusitis can occur from one of these conditions:

- The small openings (ostia) from the sinuses to the nose become blocked.
- Small hairs (cilia) in the sinuses, which help move mucus out, are not working properly.
- Too much mucus is produced.

When the sinus openings become blocked and mucus accumulates, this becomes a great breeding ground for bacteria and other organisms.

Sinusitis usually follows respiratory infections, such as colds, or an allergic reaction. Some people never get sinusitis, and others develop sinusitis frequently.

People more likely to get frequent sinusitis include those with cystic fibrosis and those with immune systems weakened by HIV or chemotherapy.

The following may increase your risk for developing sinusitis:

- Air pollution and smoke
- Asthma
- Changes in altitude (flying or scuba diving)
- Dental work
- Deviated nasal septum, nasal bone spur, or polyp
- Foreign body in your nose
- Frequent swimming or diving
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

- Hospitalization, especially if you are in the hospital because of a head injury or have had a tube placed into your nose (nasogastric tube)
- Overuse of nasal decongestants (rather than continuing to relieve congestion, the problem gets worse when these are used too often or for too long)
- Pregnancy

Cystic fibrosis is one of a number of diseases that prevent the cilia from working properly. Other such diseases that put you at increased risk for sinusitis include Kartagener syndrome and immotile cilia syndrome.

Symptoms

The classic symptoms of acute sinusitis usually follow a cold that does not improve, or one that worsens after 5 - 7 days of symptoms. They include:

- Nasal congestion and discharge
- Sore throat and postnasal drip (fluid dripping down the back of your throat, especially at night or when you lie down)
- Headache -- pressure-like pain, pain behind the eyes, toothache, or facial tenderness
- Cough, often worse at night
- Fever (may be present)
- Bad breath or loss of smell
- Fatigue and generally not feeling well

Symptoms of chronic sinusitis are the same as acute sinusitis, but tend to be milder and last longer than 8 weeks.

Expectations (prognosis)

Sinus infections are usually curable with self-care measures and medical treatment. If you are having recurrent attacks, you should be checked for underlying causes such as nasal polyps or other problems.

Complications

Although very rare, complications may include:

- Abscess
- Antibiotic resistance, a situation in which the bacteria causing your sinusitis no longer responds to medicines used to treat the infection
- Meningitis, an infection that spreads to the brain
- Orbital cellulitis, an infection that spreads to the area surrounding the eye
- Osteomyelitis, an infection that spreads to the bones in the face

Calling your health care provider

Call your doctor if:

- Your symptoms last longer than 10 - 14 days or you have a cold that gets worse after 7 days
- You have a severe headache, unrelieved by over-the-counter pain medicine
- You have a fever
- You still have symptoms after taking all of your antibiotics properly

A green or yellow discharge does not necessarily indicate a sinus infection or the need for antibiotics.

Prevention

The best way to prevent sinusitis is to avoid or quickly treat flus and colds:

- Get an influenza vaccine each year.
- Wash your hands frequently, particularly after shaking hands with others.
- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, which are rich in antioxidants and other chemicals that could boost your immune system and help your body resist infection.

- Reduce stress.

Additional tips for preventing sinusitis:

- Avoid smoke and pollutants.
- Use a humidifier to increase moisture in your nose and sinuses.
- Drink plenty of fluids to increase moisture within your body.
- Take decongestants during an upper respiratory infection.
- Treat allergies promptly and appropriately.

References

Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. Evidence-based care guideline for management of acute bacterial sinusitis in children 1-18 years of age. Cincinnati (OH): Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; 2006 Jul 7. 17 p.

Slavin RG. The diagnosis and management of sinusitis. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* Dec 2005; 116(6 Suppl): S13-47.