

ELEMENTS OF ALLERGY & ASTHMA

ALLERGY & ASTHMA TRIGGERS

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More than a Cold?

If your stuffy nose and cough last longer than one or two weeks, you may have more than a cold. Sinusitis, an inflammation of the nasal sinuses, has many of the same symptoms as a cold but can be much more serious.

Often called a “sinus infection,” up to 16% of American adults will develop sinusitis each year, leading to \$5.8 billion in healthcare costs and millions of days of missed work, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI).

Sinusitis occurs when the sinuses—hollow areas behind the forehead, cheeks and nose—become swollen, which blocks mucous from draining and leads to painful pressure and infection.

Symptoms of sinusitis include:

- Swollen, painful feeling around forehead, eyes and cheeks
- Stuffy nose with thick, colored mucous
- Bad tasting post-nasal drip



- Bad breath
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Tiredness and occasional light fever

People with allergies or asthma are more likely to develop sinusitis because their nasal and sinus tissue can become swollen when they breathe in triggers like dust, pollen or smoke.

Treatment provides relief

When sinusitis is caused by an infection, antibiotics are used to kill the bacteria. Other treatments can include medications like decongestants or home remedies, such as heat pads. These treatments reduce swelling to relieve the pain.

For people with allergies, there are steps you can take to reduce your risk of

sinusitis. Your allergist/immunologist may recommend long-term treatments such as allergy shots, medication to control inflammation and avoidance of allergy triggers.

Some people get sinusitis because of problems with the structure of their nose—such as tumors or narrow nasal passages. In this case, an operation may be needed.

Your allergist/immunologist can diagnose sinusitis and help you choose the best treatment, as well as offer methods to avoid future infections.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sinusitis can last for months, or even years, if not properly treated.

To the Point

- A doctor can diagnose sinusitis through a physical examination, but may also require allergy testing, x-rays or use of a fiber-optic scope.
- Treatments for sinusitis include antibiotics, decongestants, nasal sprays or non-medicinal therapies such as hot packs, humidifiers and salt water rinses.
- Many people can prevent sinusitis by reducing their allergy symptoms—allergy shots, avoiding exposure to allergy triggers and use of medications may be helpful.
- Visit www.aaaai.org for more information on sinusitis, allergies and asthma.

An allergist/immunologist is the best-qualified medical expert to diagnose and treat allergies. To find an allergist/immunologist near you, visit the Physician Referral Directory at www.aaaai.org.

For more information on sinusitis, please visit the Patients & Consumers Center of the AAAAI Web site, www.aaaai.org.



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