

“Do I need to be seen today?”

Let's Talk About...

Acute Sinusitis
(aka “Sinus Infection”)

What are sinuses?

Sinuses are air chambers in the bones around your eyes, cheeks and nose. They are connected to the nasal passages. Sinuses make mucous, a fluid that cleans bacteria and other particles out of the air you breathe.

What is acute sinusitis?

Acute sinusitis (in other words, a sinus infection) is the swelling of the lining of the sinuses. It is common for sinusitis to develop after you've had a cold or nasal allergy. Viruses (and less commonly, bacteria) can get trapped in the sinuses, causing a sinus infection. Acute sinusitis can last up to 2 to 4 weeks.

What are the signs & symptoms?

Sinus infections often present with many of the same signs and symptoms of a cold. Common signs and symptoms of a sinus infection include:

- A cold that starts to get better, then worsens.
- Pain or pressure between the eyes, on the cheeks or on the forehead.
- Discomfort in the upper teeth or pain while chewing.
- Stuffy nose combined with thick yellow, green or grey nasal discharge (may be worse on one side).
- Sore throat, coughing, fatigue.
- Low-grade fever is also possible.

Should I be seen in the office?

Most people with acute sinusitis will get better on their own and don't benefit from an office visit. The majority of sinus infections are viral and do not respond to antibiotics. Most people with sinusitis recover on their own, even if the infection is bacterial.

Please consider the following information before booking an appointment



What can I do to feel better?

The majority of people will recover at home without any medical treatment. The following therapies may be used for symptoms:

- Drink plenty of fluids to help loosen mucus; sip hot liquids.
- Apply moist heat to your face (using a warm, damp towel or gel pack) to help ease the pain. Apply it for 5 to 10 minutes, as needed.
- Gargle with warm salt water a few times a day to alleviate sore throat.
- Sinus irrigation with saline solution (such as a Neti Pot or NeilMed sinus rinse) may also help to ease symptoms.
- Nasal decongestant spray (no longer than 3 days - talk to your pharmacist); Not recommended for children.
- For pain relief: use acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin); take medication as outlined on package.
- Avoid using antihistamines (they may thicken mucus).

When to call the WCFHT



Most people with acute sinusitis recover without medical care. However, if you or a person you care for have any of the following signs or symptoms, call us for advice.

- Patient is younger than 4 months
- Fever above 100.4° F (38° C)
- Severe pain and tenderness in the sinuses
- Severe or persistent headache
- Pain with eye movement, swelling around the eyes
- Signs of a skin infection, such as hot, red rash that spreads quickly
- Illness lasting more than 10 days with no improvement or worsening of symptoms

In Children:

In addition to the above, call us for advice if your child has any of the following signs:

- Mental change (e.g. sluggishness)
- Child is not acting or interacting normally

