

SINUS INFECTION (SINUSITIS)

DEFINITION

A sinus infection is a bacterial infection of one of the seven sinuses that normally drain into the nose. Sinus congestion can occur without an infection if one of the sinus openings becomes blocked from a cold or hay fever. As bacteria multiply within the sinuses, pain and pressure occur above the eyebrow, behind the eye, or over the cheekbone. Other symptoms can include a profuse yellow nasal discharge, postnasal drip, a blocked nose, fever, and bad breath. Until recent years, we didn't recognize that a chronic cough can be caused by a sinus infection. Swallowing sinus secretions is normal and harmless but may lead to some nausea. Most sinus infections can be diagnosed without sinus x-ray studies. The following treatment should reduce pain and fever within 48 hours or less.

HOME TREATMENT

Antibiotics

Your child's antibiotic is _____. Your child's dose is _____ given _____ times per day by mouth during waking hours for _____ days.

This medicine will kill bacteria that are causing the sinus infection. Try not to forget any of the doses. If your child goes to school or to a babysitter, arrange for someone to give the afternoon dose. If the medicine is a liquid, use a measuring spoon so you give the right amount. Also, an antibiotic should not be saved from one illness to the next because it loses its strength. Even though your child will feel better in a few days, give all the medicine to prevent the infection from flaring up.

Nasal Washes. Use warm water or saline nose drops followed by suction or nose blowing to wash dried mucus or pus out of the nose. Do nasal washes

at least four times a day or whenever your child can't breathe through the nose. If the air in your home is dry, run a humidifier.

Decongestant Nose Drops or Spray. To drain the sinuses, use a generic, long-acting vasoconstrictor nose drop or spray (such as oxymetazoline), which is nonprescription. The usual dose for adolescents is 2 drops or sprays per nostril twice daily. For younger children use 1 drop or spray each day. Use the medicine routinely for the first 2 or 3 days of treatment. Thereafter don't use the spray or nose drops unless the sinus congestion or pain recurs. Stop the drops or spray after 5 days to prevent rebound swelling.

Pain Relief Medicines. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be given for a few days for sinus pain or any fever over 102°F (39°C).

Oral Antihistamines. If your child also has hay fever, give her allergy medicine. Otherwise, avoid antihistamines because they can slow down the movement of secretions out of the sinuses.

Contagiousness. Sinus infections are not contagious. Your child can return to school or day care when she is feeling better and the fever is gone.



CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- Redness or swelling occurs on the cheek, eyelid, or forehead.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Within 24 hours if

- The fever or pain is not gone after your child has taken the antibiotic for 48 hours.
- You have other questions or concerns.