

SINUSITIS

Sinusitis is when inflammation occurs in the lining of the nose and sinuses. This inflammation causes the blockage of the natural drainage pathways of the sinuses. Patients with sinusitis may experience:

- Nasal obstruction
- Facial pressure or sinus headaches
- Nasal discharge / drainage
- Post-nasal drip
- Decreased smell and taste

Acute Sinusitis

When these symptoms are severe and only last a short time (less than 4 weeks), it is called “acute” sinusitis. Often, this is caused by a bacterial infection of the sinuses. Treatment for acute sinusitis may often include:

- Oral antibiotics
- Oral steroids
- Nasal steroid sprays
- Nasal saline rinses, also known as sinus irrigation
- Mucus thinning medications such as Mucinex
- Antihistamines
- Nasal decongestants such as Afrin or Vicks nasal spray
- Oral decongestants such as Sudafed, Allegra-D, Mucinex-D
 - It is important to note that oral and nasal decongestants should never be used for more than 3-5 days. Continued use longer than this time period may lead to worsening nasal congestion

Chronic Sinusitis

Chronic sinusitis occurs when the inflammation in the sinuses persists long term, and is similar to nasal allergies and asthma in that it is a chronic illness involving inflammation of the body's airways. Chronic sinusitis sometimes involves recurrent or chronic infection of the sinuses. **The majority of patients with chronic sinusitis can be successfully treated with a variety of medications, as listed above.**

In a small percentage of patients, medications do not sufficiently alleviate the symptoms of chronic sinusitis. These patients often require additional evaluation with CT imaging, and may be candidates for Endoscopic Sinus Surgery.

Endoscopic Sinus Surgery is a minimally invasive surgical technique to widen the natural sinus drainage pathways and remove infection and inflammation from within the sinuses. The majority of patients have great improvements in their quality of life after undergoing Endoscopic Sinus Surgery.

Balloon sinuplasty is a minimally invasive technique to dilate the natural sinus drainage pathways with a balloon and may be used by itself or in conjunction with Endoscopic Sinus Surgery to treat some patients with chronic sinusitis.

If you are suffering from any of the above symptoms, you may benefit from an evaluation by an Ear, Nose, & Throat surgeon.