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Sinusitis

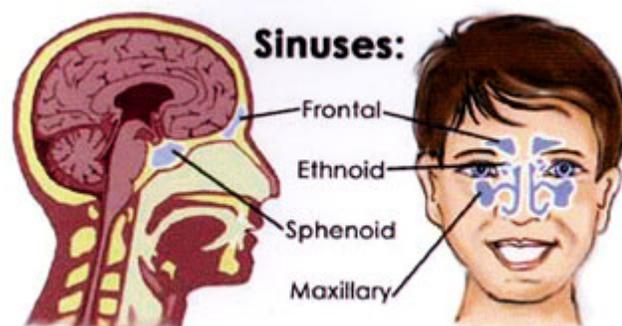
If your child has been waking up with headaches, feeling stuffy or congested, and experiencing swelling around the eyes, your child may have sinusitis. Sinusitis is an infection of the sinus air spaces found in the bones around the nose (see picture below).

Sinus infections can make your child uncomfortable, but they're usually not severe, and with antibiotic treatment, a sinus infection will improve.

What Is Sinusitis?

Sinusitis is an inflammation of the sinuses, which is usually caused by a bacterial infection. The sinuses are the moist air spaces within the bones of the face around the nose.

- The **Frontal sinuses** are located in the area near the eyebrows.
- The **Maxillary sinuses** are located inside the cheekbones.
- The **Ethmoid sinuses** are between the eyes.
- The **Sphenoid sinuses** sit behind the ethmoid sinuses.



The sinuses are normally filled with air, making the facial bones less dense and much lighter in weight. Sinuses also give resonance to your child's voice. Viruses or bacteria - or a combination of both - can cause sinusitis. Generally when a person has an upper respiratory infection caused by a virus such as a rhinovirus, that person also has inflammation of the sinuses, or viral sinusitis. The nasal congestion associated with the common cold doesn't allow the sinuses to drain properly, trapping bacteria inside. Bacterial sinusitis can then result. Bacterial sinusitis tends to make children sicker than viral sinusitis, with resulting facial pain and swelling and sometimes fever. Bacteria that are normally found in your upper respiratory tract, such as *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Moraxella catarrhalis*, and *Haemophilus influenzae* are most likely to cause sinusitis. These bacteria are the same bacteria that commonly cause ear infections.

Signs and Symptoms

These signs and symptoms (some or all in combination) may indicate bacterial sinusitis. Fever greater than 102 degrees F may or may not be present.

- a stuffy or runny nose with a daytime cough that lasts for **10 to 14 days without improvement**
- **colored discharge** from the nose (this can occur with both viral and bacterial sinusitis, but continuous thick, green discharge for greater than 10-14 days, is more likely to be from bacterial

sinusitis)

- persistent dull pain or swelling around the eyes
- tenderness or pain in or around the cheekbones
- sensation of pressure in your head
- headache that appears in the morning or when bending over
- breath that suddenly smells bad, even after brushing teeth
- painful upper teeth

Many of these symptoms are similar to what your child experiences with a viral upper respiratory infection and allergic rhinitis (inflammation of the nose and sinuses due to allergy), both of which are more common than sinusitis.

How Is A Sinus Infection Treated?

- Bacterial sinusitis is treated with antibiotics for 2 weeks.
- A decongestant (pseudoephedrine) will help clear out a blocked nose and allow better drainage of the sinuses.
- Antihistamines will lessen allergy symptoms, which may also be blocking sinus drainage.

What Else Can Be Done To Make My Child Feel Better?

Take the complete course of antibiotics to treat the sinus infection. Even if your child feels better, it's important to take the full course of antibiotics. This helps kill all of the bacteria causing the infection, and lessen the chance of a reoccurrence.

The following will provide more relief:

- Get adequate rest
- Encourage fluids so your child's immune system can work along with the antibiotics to fight the infection
- Take ibuprofen or acetaminophen to relieve pain and inflammation.
- A cool-mist humidifier may soothe the sinuses.
- Warm compresses usually help with facial pain.
- Saline (salt-based) nonprescription nose drops will help to keep the nasal passages moist.

Can Sinusitis Be Prevented?

- Try using a humidifier during cold weather to stop dry heated air from irritating your sinuses, which can make them more susceptible to infection. (It's important to keep the humidifier clean because mold forms easily in moist environments.)
- If your child has allergies, make an extra effort to keep them under control because they can aggravate sinuses and make your children more prone to getting an infection.
- Although sinusitis itself is not contagious, it is often preceded by a cold, which can be spread to other family members and friends. The most effective way to prevent the spread of germs is to wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Steer clear of used tissues, and try to stay out of the line of fire when someone sneezes.

When Should I Call My Doctor?

- **Facial pain around the sinuses**
- **Cough that is lasting greater than 10-14 days without improvement**

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.