

Sinusitis

If you have nasal congestion, facial pressure, cough and thick nasal discharge, you may have rhinosinusitis, commonly referred to as sinusitis. Your sinuses are hollow cavities within your cheekbones, around your eyes and behind your nose. They contain mucus, which helps to warm, moisten and filter the air you breathe. When something blocks the mucus from draining normally, an infection can occur.

Acute Sinusitis

Acute sinusitis refers to sinusitis symptoms lasting less than four weeks. Most cases begin as a common cold. Symptoms often go away within a week to 10 days; but in some people, a bacterial infection develops.

Chronic Sinusitis

Chronic sinusitis, also referred to as chronic rhinosinusitis, is often diagnosed when symptoms have gone on for more than 12 weeks, despite medical treatment.

People with [allergic rhinitis](#) or [asthma](#) are more likely to suffer from chronic sinusitis. This is because the airways are more likely to become inflamed when allergic rhinitis or asthma are present. Sinusitis may also be caused by an infection, a fungus, deviated nasal septum, nasal polyps or in rare cases an immune system deficiency.

Symptoms

Sinusitis symptoms, whether acute or chronic, frequently develop after a cold or during times of severe or ongoing allergic rhinitis symptoms. The most obvious sign of sinusitis is a painful pressure in the cheeks and forehead. Other symptoms include:

- Thick yellow-green nasal discharge
- Postnasal drip, often with a bad taste
- Cough
- Congestion
- Toothache

In cases of acute sinusitis, a fever may develop.

Diagnosis

[Allergy testing](#) performed by an [allergist / immunologist](#) can identify what allergic triggers might be behind your chronic or reoccurring sinus infections. In chronic or severe cases, your doctor may also examine your nasal passages using a technique called rhinoscopy or nasal endoscopy. In this procedure, a thin, flexible instrument is inserted up the nostril to view the sinus passages and look for blockages.

Your doctor may order a MRI or CT scan to look for abnormalities in the sinuses – narrow drainage passages, polyps or a deviated septum.

Make an appointment with your doctor right away if you have: a fever, pain or swelling in the face or eye, redness on the cheek or around the eye, severe headaches, confusion or a stiff neck.

Adapted from: <http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies/sinusitis.aspx>