

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winter's Misery: Sinusitis

By Chris Hartsfield, NP
For The Ruby Valley Hospital

So you wake up with a headache in your forehead, around your eyes and your cheeks hurt. Your nose is draining into your throat and you have a sore throat. You generally do not feel good and want it to just go away. It has been two days now and you really have to do something. You have way too many things to do and you can't be sick now. You see your medical provider and are diagnosed with sinusitis. So what is that?

Sinuses are empty cavities that are located behind the cheek bones, behind the nose and around the eyes. Sinusitis, also known as rhinosinusitis, is an inflammation of the sinus cavities. There are two basic types, acute and chronic. Acute sinusitis is inflammation that lasts less than four weeks and chronic sinusitis is inflammation lasting longer than 3 months. Symptoms of acute rhinosinusitis include nasal congestion and obstruction, purulent (bad smelling or bad looking) nasal discharge, upper tooth discomfort, and facial pain or pressure that is worse when bending forward. Other signs and symptoms include fever, fatigue, cough, reduced or inability to smell, ear pressure or fullness, headache, and halitosis. If symptoms include redness around an eye, fever of 102 degrees or above with severe headache, or changes in vision or mental status, seek medical attention immediately because these can be signs of a problem more than a simple sinus infection.

The most common cause of sinusitis is viral in nature (a common cold) and usually lasts between 7-10 days. According to all studies 98 to 99.5 percent of all sinus infections are caused by viruses and do not require antibiotics. Antibiotics are ineffective in treating any kind of viral infection. Even 75 percent of bacterial sinus infections are self-limiting and will resolve in about one month without treatment.

So now what? You just want to feel better. Treatment for acute and chronic sinusitis is individualized based on your complaints, duration of signs and symptoms and any past medical problems being treated. Call your provider for the most appropriate treatment for you and remember there is no magic cure for most cases of sinusitis.

For more information, please visit the following websites -

http://www.umm.edu/patiented/articles/how_acute_sinusitis_treated_000062_8.htm
<http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/sinusitis/overview.html>

Chris Hartsfield
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
Family Nurse Practitioner-Board Certified
Ruby Valley Hospital