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Do I have a cold? Or is it Sinusitis!

Presented by:

Introduction

Every wonder if you have a cold or a sinus infection, which is called Sinusitis. Sinusitis has symptoms that are similar to those of a common cold or allergies. It is a costly health problem, but it is also one that can be tricky to diagnose.

The fact is you are more likely to develop sinusitis after contracting a cold. If your cold does not improve after seven days or it actually worsens, then your cold may actually be a sinus infection. Sinusitis is classified as either acute or chronic. An infection in the acute stage lasts up to eight weeks, while chronic is classified as any time beyond eight weeks. Regardless of classification, an infection in the sinuses causes inflammation, pressure and pain in the affected areas and can make daily life miserable. Symptoms include mucous discharge and blockage, headache, fever, facial and teeth pain, bad taste in the mouth, and coughing to expel mucous. Sinusitis may be the result of a virus, bacteria or fungus, and each may require a different medical treatment. Sinus infections – or sinusitis - affect about 35 million

people in North America every year, and it accounts for more antibiotic prescriptions than any other health problem.

Treatment Options

You may help alleviate symptoms by implementing the following:

- Drink plenty of fluids. This will thin the mucous and reduce nasal blockage.
- Breathe steam – to keep nasal passages moist. Take a shower, bath or fill a bowl with hot water and inhale to get sufficient amounts of steam into your sinus cavities.
- Decongestant tablets and sprays can reduce nasal blockage and ease pressure. However, extended use of sprays for more than three days may actually cause rebound congestion. As an alternative, you can try saltwater nose drops to keep your nose clear.
- Over-the-counter pain medications can reduce aches and fever. You can also use a hot, wet towel or warm gel compress and apply to your face over the sinus areas for

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QUESTION:

How many North Americans are affected by sinusitis each year?

- A) 15 million
- B) 35 million
- C) 75 million

Answer:
B) 35 million

TRUE OR FALSE:

Sinusitis is only caused by bacteria

False. It can also be caused by viruses and fungi.

QUESTION:

Which of the following is recommended for sinusitis symptoms?

- A) Drink fluids
- B) Breathe steam
- C) Cleanse nasal passages
- D) All of the above

Answer:
D) All of the above

pain relief and pressure reduction. Leave the compress on the skin for ten minutes, and then repeat several times throughout the day.

Nasal Irrigation

Another natural solution to preventing and treating sinusitis is called nasal cleansing, also known as nasal irrigation. Cleaning the nasal passages is part of the ancient Indian practice of Ayurvedic medicine. Cleansing the nasal passages of excess mucous not only keeps your nasal airway clear of proinflammatory substances, but it reduces the need for medication. A study on nasal irrigation using saline confirms it helps reduce symptoms and improves quality of life for sinusitis sufferers.¹

A common way of irrigating the nose is to use a neti pot, which has a long spout that you insert into the nose and let saline solution flow through the area. Neti pots and similar devices are available at many pharmacies and natural health stores.



Concerns About Antibiotics

If home treatments are not effective, you may need antibiotics. However, the use of antibiotics is not without controversy. Many medical experts claim antibiotics are prescribed too often for this condition - possibly because it is difficult to discern if sinusitis is caused by a virus, bacteria or fungus. Viral sinusitis can create conditions that allow bacterial infections to develop. However, antibiotics are effective only against bacteria - not viruses or fungi. The overuse of these drugs can lead to antibiotic resistance and the creation of superbugs.

Some research also questions the value of antibiotics. In a sinusitis study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, researchers noted that antibiotics and a topical steroid were no more effective at treating symptoms than a placebo. They remarked, "Our main conclusions are that among patients with the typical features of acute bacterial sinusitis, neither an antibiotic nor a topical steroid alone or in combination are effective in altering the symptom severity, the duration, or the natural history of the condition."²



Quote to Inspire

"I eat really healthy, and if I'm tired, I take a nap"

- Casper Van Dien

References and sources:

1. Efficacy of daily hypertonic saline nasal irrigation among patients with sinusitis: a randomized controlled trial - J Fam Pract. 2002 Dec;51(12):1049-55.
2. Antibiotics and Topical Nasal Steroid for Treatment of Acute Maxillary Sinusitis - JAMA 2007;298(21):2487-2496. doi: 10.1001/jama.298.21.2487.



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