

Winter Action Patient Information Leaflet

SINUSITIS



The sinuses are small hollow spaces in the bones surrounding the nose. After a cold the lining of these can become inflamed and infected and produce large amounts of mucus. This condition may also occur after a tooth infection and is known as sinusitis.

Sinusitis can cause the following symptoms:

- Pain over the affected area. This is often felt as a throbbing pain over the cheeks, eyes or forehead.
- The nose may be runny with lots of yellow/green mucus. Sometimes the sinuses block with very thick mucus which can be very painful.
- Some patients may develop a high temperature (fever).

How can sinusitis be treated?

There are several things that you can do at home to relieve the symptoms of sinusitis:

- Painkillers such as aspirin or paracetamol may be useful in relieving the discomfort.
- Decongestant tablets, drops or sprays can help relieve a blocked nose. They should be used for no more than 5-7 days because they may make your symptoms worse after this time. Your pharmacist can advise you which product may be suitable. Some preparations are unsuitable if you have high blood pressure.

In very severe cases your doctor may prescribe a short course of antibiotics, often for no more than five days.

Can I do anything else?

If you have sinusitis do not smoke and stay away from smoky environments. You may find it useful to inhale steam by holding your head over a bowl containing hot, steamy water (not boiling). Adding a few drops of eucalyptus oil or some menthol crystals to the water may help to drain the sinuses of mucus.

When should I speak to my doctor?

Most cases of sinusitis will clear up without treatment. If you suffer any of the following symptoms, contact your doctor as soon as possible.

- If the sinusitis does not improve after 5 days treatment.
- If your face starts to swell, particularly around the eyes.
- If the pain gets worse or you develop a high temperature.

For further information please log on to :

www.patient.co.uk or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk