

What is Sinusitis?

Sinusitis occurs when the sinuses become swollen or infected. The sinuses are the hollow spaces in the skull above the eyebrows, between the eyes and under your cheek bones.

The sinuses are lined with mucus membranes that create a watery fluid called mucus. Mucus plays a role in our immune system by trapping airborne particles, such as dust and bacteria.

Colds, flu, allergies and air pollution can make the mucus membranes swell. The mucus becomes thick, decreasing drainage from the sinuses. The result is often painful pressure within the face.



615 Niagara Court
Duluth, MN 55812

Phone: 218-726-8155
Fax: 218-726-6132

Hours:
September through May

8:00am - 4:00pm, MTWF
9:00am - 4:00pm, Thursday

Summer Hours

9:00am - 3:00pm, M-F

UMD Health Services
Health Education, 2013dd

Sinusitis

Signs and Symptoms
Treatment
Prevention

UMD Health Services

Nurse care line: 218-726-7870

To make an appointment: 218-726-8155

www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv

Signs and Symptoms

If you have sinusitis, you may experience the following, worsening over a period of several days:

- Stuffiness/congestion
- Pain and/or pressure within the face near the sinuses
- Headaches
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Thick and/or discolored mucus
- Pain or pressure associated with your teeth or jaw

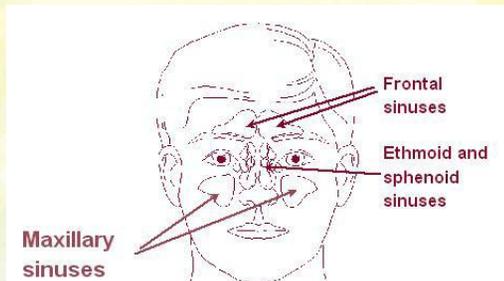


Illustration: National Institutes of Health

Treatment

Home Treatments:

Drink lots of fluids to help thin the mucus.
Take a hot shower or use hot packs to help loosen mucus and keep air passages and sinuses moist.

Use a humidifier.

Avoid cigarette smoke and allergens that can irritate the sinuses.

Over-The-Counter Treatments:

Oral decongestants, such as pseudoephedrine, can help relieve sinus swelling and pressure. You will need to present a driver's license to pharmacy staff in order to purchase this.

Decongestant sprays help relieve sinus swelling and pressure, and should be used as directed, for no longer than 3 days. Overuse can cause congestion.

Neti pot: mix 1 teaspoon *non-iodized* salt and 2 cups lukewarm water in a neti pot and use as directed on the package.

Saline nasal spray is another option, similar in action to the neti pot.

Aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help relieve headaches and sinus pain.

Treatment, continued

When to see a provider:

Antibiotics may be needed to treat a bacterial infection of the sinuses. It is recommended to seek professional advice if you experience the following:

- Home treatments, or over-the-counter treatments, do not relieve symptoms after 5 days.
- Cold symptoms do not get better after 10-14 days, or get better and then worse again.
- Facial pain or headaches do not subside with pain relievers.
- Your vision is impaired or you notice swelling around the eyes.
- After 5-7 days, your mucus darkens.
- You have a fever for 3-5 days.

Prevention

- If you have allergies, taking daily allergy medications or antihistamines before exposure to allergens, can help prevent sinusitis. Using a neti pot in the shower on a daily basis may also be helpful.
- Stop smoking.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Wash hands often to avoid exposure to virus and bacteria.
- Take care of yourself when you *start* to feel ill, with rest, fluids and decongestants.
- Getting a flu shot may prevent sinusitis due to influenza.