

Patient Information Sheet on Diagnosis of Acute Sinusitis



Question	Answer
<p>What are the sinuses?</p>	<p>Sinuses are hollow spaces in the bones around the nose that connect to the nose through small, narrow channels. The sinuses stay healthy when the channels are open, which allows air from the nose to enter the sinuses and mucus made in the sinuses to drain into the nose.</p>
<p>What is sinusitis?</p>	<p>Sinusitis, also called rhinosinusitis, affects about 1 in 8 adults annually and generally occurs when viruses or bacteria infect the sinuses (often during a cold) and begin to multiply. Part of the body's reaction to the infection causes the sinus lining to swell, blocking the channels that drain the sinuses. This causes mucus and pus to fill up the nose and sinus cavities.</p>
<p>How can I tell if I have acute sinusitis?</p>	<p>You have acute sinusitis when there has been up to 4 weeks of cloudy or colored (not clear) drainage from the nose plus one or both of the following: (a) a stuffy, congested, or blocked nose or (b) pain, pressure or fullness in the face, head, or around the eyes.</p>
<p>How can I tell if my sinusitis is caused by viruses or bacteria?</p>	<p>Acute viral sinusitis is likely if you have been sick less than 10 days and are not getting worse. Acute bacterial sinusitis is likely when you do not improve at all within 10 days of getting sick or when you get worse within 10 days after beginning to get better.</p>
<p>Why is it important to tell if my sinusitis is caused by bacteria?</p>	<p>Because sinusitis is treated differently based on cause: acute viral sinusitis does not benefit from antibiotics, but some patients with acute bacterial sinusitis may get better faster with an antibiotic.</p>

Patient Information Sheet on Treating Acute Bacterial Rhinosinusitis (ABRS)

Question	Answer
How long will it take before I feel better?	Most patients with ABRS feel better within 7 days, and by 15 days, about 90% are cured or improved.
Is there anything I can do for symptomatic relief?	<p>There are several ways to relieve sinusitis symptoms that should be discussed with your doctor to decide which are best for you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can relieve pain and fever. 2. Saline irrigations, or washing out the nose with salt water, can relieve symptoms and remove mucus that is hard to blow out. 3. Nasal steroid sprays can reduce symptoms after 15 days of use, but the benefit is small (about 14 people must use them to get 1 person better), and side effects include headache, nasal itching, and nosebleeds. <p>Decongestants may help you breathe easier and can be taken as a nasal spray (for no more than 3 days in a row to avoid worsening congestion) or a pill by mouth.</p>
Is there anything I should not do?	Antihistamines and oral steroid medicines should not be used routinely because they have side effects and do not relieve symptoms.
If I have ABRS, do I have to take an antibiotic?	No, both watchful waiting and antibiotic therapy are proven ways to treat ABRS. Most people get better naturally, and antibiotics only slightly increase symptom relief (about 10 to 15 people must use antibiotics to get 1 more person better after 7-15 days).
Is there any downside to using antibiotic?	Antibiotics have side effects that include rash, upset stomach, nausea, vomiting, allergic reactions, and causing resistant germs.
What is “watchful waiting” for ABRS?	Watchful waiting means delaying antibiotic treatment of ABRS for up to 7 days after diagnosis to see if you get better on your own.
How is watchful waiting done?	Your doctor can give you an antibiotic prescription, but you should only fill the prescription and take the antibiotic if you do not get better after 7 days or if you get worse at any time. If you do use the antibiotic, contact your doctor’s office and let them know.
If I use an antibiotic, for how many days should I take it?	Antibiotics are usually given for 10 days to treat ABRS, but shorter courses may be equally effective. Ask your doctor about a 5- to 7-day course of antibiotics since side effects are less common.

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