



spotlight on health

Allergies Or Sinusitis? Does Your Nose Always Know?

(NAPSA)—It's allergy season and you are feeling it—pressure between your eyes or in your forehead, a stuffy nose, and itchy, watery eyes. If your symptoms seem worse than usual or last more than 10-14 days, it could be more than just allergies. You could have sinusitis—a sinus infection—and should see your doctor.

What's the connection? Irritation from allergies can cause sinuses to become inflamed and filled with mucus, resulting in blockage of vital nasal drainage. Without drainage, viruses or bacteria are more likely to breed and can cause a sinus infection.

Thirty-five million Americans suffer from sinusitis each year, but many do not seek the treatment they need. Because the symptoms of bacterial sinus infections are similar to those of allergies and respiratory viruses (like a cold), you may find it difficult to tell the difference and know when to see a doctor. Here are characteristics of each and what to do if you are diagnosed.

Allergies

Symptoms

- Sneezing, stuffy, runny and/or itchy nose
- Clear or whitish nasal drip and tickle in throat
- Itchy, watery, or burning eyes
- Mild pressure or pain in upper teeth, cheeks, top of nose, between eyes, or in forehead

What to Do

- Avoid exposure to allergens and control environment when possible
- Drink plenty of fluids



- Avoid smoking, caffeine and alcohol

• If recommended by a doctor, take a non-sedating antihistamine or decongestant to reduce nasal congestion and swelling; use steroid eyedrops to relieve itchy, watery eyes and use a steroid nasal spray or an additional anti-inflammatory medication to prevent allergy symptoms

Viral Sinus Infections

Symptoms

- High-grade fever (101.5 F or higher) at times
- Generalized body aches and fatigue
- Coughing
- Drainage from nose thickens
- Nasal discharge is clear to yellowish
- Feel need to see physician within two days of symptom onset

What to Do

- Wash hands frequently and properly
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Avoid smoking, caffeine and alcohol
- Use humidifiers to control room moisture

• If recommended by a doctor, take an over-the-counter pain reliever, take a decongestant to help relieve pressure and congestion, and/or use over-the-counter decongestant nasal spray for a short period of time

• **DO NOT** ask doctor for an antibiotic, as it will not be effective against a viral infection. Overuse and misuse of antibiotics can cause bacteria to become resistant to currently available antibiotics

Bacterial Sinus Infections

Symptoms

- Low-grade fever (101.5 or lower)
- Moderate to severe pressure or pain in upper teeth, cheeks, top of nose, between eyes, or in forehead
- Stuffy nose with thick, yellow to brown or bloody mucus

What to Do

• Follow tips for viral infections AND:

• If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic, take all the medication as instructed even if you feel much better within a few days of starting your prescription. If you do not take all medication, the infection may return and some bacteria may develop resistance to the antibiotic you were given.

To learn more about sinusitis and how to reduce your risk, visit www.SinusFacts.com, a new web site sponsored by Bayer Corporation. Information about sinus conditions and an interactive quiz can help you determine if your symptoms warrant a trip to the doctor.