

# Sinusitis

PATIENT  
INFORMATION

This leaflet explains what you can do to help and what you should think about if you have been diagnosed with sinusitis.

## What is sinusitis?

The sinuses are air-filled cavities near the nose. Colds can cause inflammation in both the nose and sinuses. The inflammation can cause phlegm, thick mucus and facial pain. Other symptoms may include a blocked nose, a poor sense of smell and toothache. You may also develop a fever.

Viruses and bacteria can cause sinusitis. It may cause discomfort but it usually gets better on its own. It can take up to two to three weeks for the condition to improve in adults.

## What you can do

You can take steps to relieve your discomfort yourself as you start to feel better.

- If you have a blocked nose, sleeping with your head raised up on an extra pillow can provide relief.
- Flushing your nose with lukewarm water or a saline solution may relieve your discomfort.
- If your blocked nose is bothering you, nasal spray may help. Use it for a maximum of ten days.
- A corticosteroid nasal spray may reduce swelling of the mucous membranes if you also have allergies.
- Over-the-counter medications containing paracetamol or ibuprofen can ease pain.

You can ask your pharmacist about what else you can do to alleviate your symptoms. You can also get medical advice by calling 1177.



Folkhälsomyndigheten

## What should you be aware of?

Please contact your healthcare provider again if

- only one side of your nose is blocked and there is no change in side
- you have persistent or worsening symptoms for ten days or more, with coloured mucus and facial pain, especially if the pain is only on one side
- you develop severe headaches
- you develop a high fever
- you get worse quickly.

It is unusual for children to develop sinusitis that needs treatment. Children often have several colds a year, sometimes with coloured mucus. You should, however, seek medical care right away if your child

- develops a high fever
- screams and is restless and you think this is due to them being in pain
- develops swelling or redness of the face
- is much more sluggish than usual or is not very responsive.

A prolonged runny nose in just one nostril can also sometimes be due to something being stuck in the child's nose, such as a bead.

PLEASE TURN OVER... ➤

Strama

## Do antibiotics help if you have sinusitis?

Most often, antibiotics make no difference to how fast you recover from sinusitis. However, antibiotics may help if symptoms are severe or if they get worse despite treatment to relieve symptoms. If the doctor decides that you need antibiotics, it is important that you take the medication as instructed by the doctor.

## Are there any disadvantages to antibiotics?

Antibiotics are important medications needed for a number of bacterial infections. They should only be taken when there is a clear benefit, as antibiotics also have disadvantages. Antibiotics also kill the 'good' bacteria in your body. Antibiotics can cause side effects, such as diarrhoea and rashes/hives.

The more antibiotics are used in society, the bigger the risk of bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics and more difficult to treat. This is another reason why antibiotics must only be used when there is a benefit.

### Notes

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Call **1177** if you need medical advice. They will help you assess the symptoms or explain where you can go for treatment. You can also visit **[www.1177.se](http://www.1177.se)**

This information was produced by the Public Health Agency of Sweden and Strama, the Swedish strategic programme against antibiotic resistance. The fact sheet is part of the Antibiotic Smart Sweden initiative. The text is based on treatment recommendations from the Swedish Medical Products Agency. The information applies to the expected progression of common infections. The fact sheet can be downloaded in Swedish and several other languages from [www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/patinfo-bihalor](http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/patinfo-bihalor)

