

Sinusitis is an infection or inflammation of the sinuses.

What to look for

- pain and pressure in the face and behind the eyes.
- blocked nose.
- post nasal drip.
- mucus is smelly and yellow or discoloured.
- toothache.

The sinuses are the air-filled pockets in the bones of the face.

The four pairs of sinuses are usually hollow and filled with air and light mucus. The mucus traps dirt brought in by the air we breathe; then the mucus is pushed out through tiny openings that serve as drains. These openings, known as ostia, are very small and are mostly at the bottom of the cavities where mucus can drain out easily. However there are a few cavities with the openings at the top which makes draining mucus more difficult.

Causes

When the small openings, called ostia, become blocked, the sinuses become inflamed and this is usually the cause of sinusitis.

The mucus can no longer escape, pressure builds up as a consequence and the infection in the sinuses is trapped. The bacteria multiply and the symptoms of sinus start.

The ostia will become blocked as a result of colds and flu, allergies and hay fever.

The ostia may also become blocked because of abnormalities in the nasal passages or as a symptom of other diseases.

Traditional Treatment

Once diagnosed as sinusitis, your doctor will more than likely attempt to restore drainage within the sinuses. You will also give you antibiotics if there is an infection present.

Dietary Considerations

Increase your intake of fluids - filtered water, vegetable and fruit juices, soups and herbal teas. Avoid spicy food, alcohol and smoking. Consider taking supplements of Vitamin A, C, Zinc lozenges, potassium, chloride, Garlic, ginkgo biloba and goldenseal.

Personal Care

- Steam is great for sinus problems - fill up your bathroom sink with hot water, bend over it with a towel over your head to keep the steam in the area and breathe.
- Use warm compresses on your nose to help open your sinuses.
- Drink plenty of liquids.

Prevention

- First, avoid allergenic substances.
- Avoid cigarette smoke.

When to seek further professional advice

- the condition does not improve within seven days or recurs frequently.