



# Sinusitis

## Patient and Family Education

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**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Your child's doctor or a member of your child's health care team will talk with you about specific care for your child.**

### What is sinusitis?

Sinusitis is an infection of the sinuses (the air-filled, bony cavities around the forehead, cheeks, nose and eyes). They can become infected when blocked by swelling or mucus due to colds or allergies. Sinusitis occurs most often in older children and adults. It is not common in babies and toddlers. Bacteria (germs) cause sinus infections, so an antibiotic is needed to help make your child well.

### What are the possible symptoms?

Your child may have one or more of these:

- Headache - either constant or when bending forward, often in the morning
- Fever
- Prolonged nasal congestion (for more than 10 days)
- Cough, especially at night
- Bad breath
- Tenderness over the sinuses

Sinus pain or colored nasal drainage does not always mean that your child has a sinus infection.

### What is the treatment?

You child's doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some general guidelines to follow include:

- Antibiotics as prescribed by your child's doctor.
- Give cough and cold medicines only as advised by your child's doctor. This includes both prescription and over-the-counter medicines.
  - For children younger than 6 years of age – cough and cold medicines do not work in this age group. They also can cause serious side effects.
  - Do not give a child younger than 6 years old any medicine that is made for children over the age of 6.
  - Many brands of cough and cold medicines have the same kinds or have unnecessary ingredients. Using more than 1 brand or mixing brands can cause a serious overdose and harm in your child.
  - Do not use a combination cold medicine that contains acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol or less costly store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil or less costly store brand) may be given for fever and pain. Follow the directions on the box carefully or ask your doctor how much medicine to give.
  - **DO NOT** give your child more than 5 doses of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period.
  - **DO NOT** give acetaminophen to babies younger than 3 months of age without talking with your child's doctor.
  - **DO NOT** give ibuprofen to babies younger than 6 months of age without talking with your child's doctor.
  - **DO NOT** use acetaminophen and ibuprofen together. **DO NOT** alternate.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

## Sinusitis, continued

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- Make sure your child takes the medicine for the entire time it is prescribed.
- Avoid cigarette smoke and odor around your child.

### When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if your child:

- Does not smile or show interest in play for at least a few minutes during any four-hour period.
- Seems to be working hard to breathe.
- Still has a fever of 100.3°F after taking the antibiotic for 48-72 hours.
- Has redness or swelling around the eyes.
- Has a severe headache not relieved by acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
- Seems to be getting worse instead of better.
- Still has symptoms after the antibiotic is finished.
- Is unable to keep the medicine down.

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