

ACUTE SINUSITIS

What is sinusitis?

Sinusitis is an infection of the sinuses which are hollow air spaces located within the bones of the head and surround the nose. Sinuses are part of our upper respiratory tract and located over the eyes, between the eyes, behind the bridge of the nose, behind the cheekbones, and behind the eyes in the upper region of the nose.

Each sinus is connected to the nose through a small opening. Air and mucus pass through these openings which is why an infection or allergy that affects the nose can also affect the sinuses.

Before most people develop bacterial sinusitis, they usually have a viral infection or a cold. These viral infections cause blockage thereby preventing mucus from flowing out of the sinuses. This allows bacteria to multiply and causing bacterial sinusitis.

TYPES OF BACTERIAL SINUSITIS

There are two major types of bacterial sinusitis.

- 1. Acute:** usually infection lasts for four weeks or less.
- 2. Chronic:** usually lasts longer than four weeks or is when a person has more than three or four episodes in a year.

SYMPTOMS OF ACUTE BACTERIAL SINUSITIS

There can be many symptoms with acute bacterial sinusitis (**ABS**). The infection and its symptoms can occur in one or more of the sinuses. The most common symptoms of **ABS** are:

- Tenderness of the upper cheeks
- Pain in the upper jaw and teeth
- Headache when you wake up in the morning
- Your forehead is painful to touch
- Swelling of the area around the eyes
- Pain between the eyes
- Nasal congestion or a runny nose
- Thick, yellow-green mucus
- Fever
- Tiredness or weakness

TREATMENT

If you have **ABS**, you may be prescribed an antibiotic. The antibiotic will eliminate the bacteria causing the infection. You may also be prescribed medicine to help relieve the symptoms, including a decongestant, pain reliever, and/or anti-inflammatory medicine.

There are other measures that can help reduce the symptoms of **ABS**. Nasal saline rinses, inhaling steam from a vaporizer, a hot shower, or a hot cup of water or other warm liquid may soothe inflamed sinuses.

PREVENTING ACUTE BACTERIAL SINUSITIS

Since **ABS** most commonly occurs after a viral infection you can best prevent **ABS** by washing your hands with soap and water frequently, avoiding cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.