

Sinus Infections:

The sinuses are air filled cavities in the skull. There are 4 sets of sinuses. The frontal sinuses lie above the eye and in front of the brain on each side. The ethmoid sinuses are a group of smaller air cells clustered between your eyes. The maxillary sinuses lie underneath each eye and the sphenoid sinuses lie in the center of your head, underneath the brain. All of the sinuses have openings which communicate with the inside of the nose.

Sinus infections are very common and 37 million Americans are afflicted with sinus infections every year. Sinus infections may be the result of bacteria, viruses, fungus, and/or uncontrolled allergies. Having several of the symptoms below may indicate one has a sinus infection.

- Nasal obstruction
- Facial congestion or fullness
- Facial pain or pressure
- Thick & discolored drainage
- Change in taste or smell
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Bad breath
- Headache
- Tooth pain
- Cough
- Ear pressure

The diagnosis of sinus infection can be made clinically. The presence of sinus infections can be confirmed either via endoscopy and/or CT scan. A fiber-optic endoscope can be inserted into the nose in clinic to visualize the outflow from the sinuses. This examination can identify the presence of infection, polyps, allergies, or masses. As an adjunct, a CT scan can be performed in resistant infections or in preparation for surgery to define the full anatomy of the sinuses.

Sinus infections can be further classified into acute and chronic infections. Acute infections last less than 4 weeks, and usually improve with medical treatment which may include antibiotics, steroids, and/or allergy medications. Adjunct therapies include decongestants, mucolytics, and sinus rinses. If sinus infections persist for a longer duration, they are classified as more chronic in nature. Chronic sinus infections are likely to require more intense medical therapy or [sinus surgery](#) (HYPERLINK) to help with clearance of infection and prevent future infections. Often, chronic infections lead to development of nasal polyps. Nasal polyps are gelatinous, non-cancerous masses which grow along the sinus outflow tracts. Treatment of nasal polyps may be medical or surgical depending on the extent and location of the polyps.

Every sinusitis patient is unique and therefore deserves a thorough evaluation by a physician experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic sinusitis. Because the etiology of sinusitis is often multi-factorial, several treatment modalities exist. Treatments are recommended and prescribed based on the patient's specific contributing factors. Patients are best served by a dedicated, meticulous evaluation and treatment plan rather than a "cookie-cutter" or generic approach to therapy.