Sinusitis in Teens: After Your Visit

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions
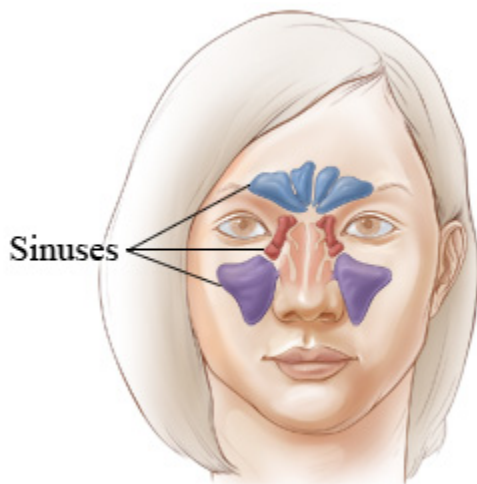
Sinusitis is an infection of the lining of the sinus cavities in your head. Sinusitis often follows a cold and causes pain and pressure in your head and face.

Antibiotics can help cure sinusitis caused by bacteria. You should begin to feel better within a couple of days, but some symptoms may last for a month or more. If your doctor thinks that you have a bacterial infection, he or she will probably prescribe antibiotics.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take your antibiotics as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.

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- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Read and follow all instructions on the label. No one younger than 20 should take aspirin. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.

- Be careful when taking over-the-counter cold or flu medicines and Tylenol at the same time. Many of these medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Read the labels to make sure that you are not taking more than the recommended dose. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.

- Breathe warm, moist air from a steamy shower, a hot bath, or a sink filled with hot water. Avoid cold, dry air. Using a humidifier in your home may help. Follow the instructions for cleaning the machine.

- Use saline (saltwater) nasal washes to help keep your nasal passages open and wash out mucus and bacteria. You can buy saline nose drops at a grocery store or drugstore. Or you can make your own at home by adding 1 teaspoon of salt and 1 teaspoon of baking soda to 2 cups of water. If you make your own, fill a bulb syringe with the solution, insert the tip into your nostril, and squeeze gently. Blow your nose.

- Put a hot, wet towel or a warm gel pack on your face 3 or 4 times a day for 5 to 10 minutes each time.

- Try a decongestant nasal spray like oxymetazoline (Afrin). Do not use it for more than 3 days in a row. Using it for more than 3 days can make your congestion worse.

- Take a decongestant such as pseudoephedrine (Sudafed) if your doctor recommends it.

- Try a cough medicine with guaifenesin if your doctor recommends it. This can thin your mucus.

- If you need to blow your nose, do it gently. Forceful blowing may force thick mucus back into your sinuses. Keep both nostrils open when you blow your nose.

When should you call for help?

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have a fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache.

- You are sensitive to light or feel very sleepy or confused.

- You have a new or higher fever.

- You have redness in your face or around your eyes, or you have pain in your face, eyes, or teeth that does not get better with pain medicine.

- The mucus from your nose becomes thicker (like pus) or has new blood in it.

- You have nosebleeds, redness or swelling around your eyes, or changes in vision.

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Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better within 2 days.

Where can you learn more?

Go to http://www.kp.org

Enter M284 in the search box to learn more about **"Sinusitis in Teens: After Your Visit"**.

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