CAREGIVER RESOURCES: Diagnosis and Management of Acute Bacterial Sinusitis: 2013 AAP Guideline

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Sinusitis

Infections

Sinuses are moist air spaces within the bones of the face around the nose. When they become infected and swell or become irritated, this is called sinusitis (or a sinus infection). These infections usually follow colds or bouts with allergies. Sinusitis is common and easily treated.

Causes

The sinuses are four sets of hollow spaces that are located in the cheekbones (maxillary sinus), the forehead (frontal sinus), behind the nasal passages (ethmoid sinus), and deep in the brain behind the nasal passages (sphenoid sinus). Sinuses are lined with the same mucous membranes that line the nose and mouth.

When someone has a cold or allergies and the nasal passages become swollen and make more mucus, so do the sinus tissues. The drainage system for the sinuses can get blocked, and mucus can become trapped in the sinuses. Bacteria in mucus and fungi can grow, causing infection.
Common Colds: Protect Yourself and Others

Sore throat and runny nose are usually the first signs of a cold, followed by coughing and sneezing. Most people recover in 7-10 days or so. You can help reduce your risk of getting a cold by washing your hands often and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.

Common colds are the main reason that children miss school and adults miss work. Each year in the United States, there are millions of cases of the common cold. Adults have an average of 2-3 colds per year, and children have even more.

Most people get colds in the winter and spring, but it is possible to get a cold any time of the year. Symptoms usually include sore throat, runny nose, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, headaches and body aches. Most people recover within about 7-10 days. However, people with weakened immune systems, asthma, or respiratory conditions may develop serious illness, such as pneumonia.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

You can help reduce your risk of getting a cold:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Wash them for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Viruses that cause colds can live on your hands, and regular handwashing can help protect you from getting sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.