



Acute Sinusitis: How to manage symptoms at home

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For some sadly even the summer hot days means no escape from **acute sinusitis**. This is swelling of the mucosal lining of the nasal cavity and paranasal sinuses, where clinical symptoms have been present for 4 weeks or less. It can be caused by either a viral or a bacterial infection.



For some people they can suffer with varying degrees of severity of sinusitis all year around. The symptoms can vary. The person might suffer from:

- Pain and tenderness over sinus areas. The pain is often **throbbing** and worse when you bend your head forward - chewing may be painful.
- A **blocked** nose. Your sense of smell may also go for a while.
- OR a runny nose. If the discharge is green/yellow, it is more likely that you have a **bacterial** infection in your sinuses. A runny nose may dry up if the sinus drainage channels become blocked with thick mucus. If this happens, pain and tenderness over the infected sinus may become worse.
- A **high** temperature above 38c.
- Headache - again gets **worse** when you bend down.
- Bad breath and toothache.
- Cough due to postnasal drip. The cough is worse at night when **lying** flat in bed.
- A feeling of pressure or **fullness** in the ears.

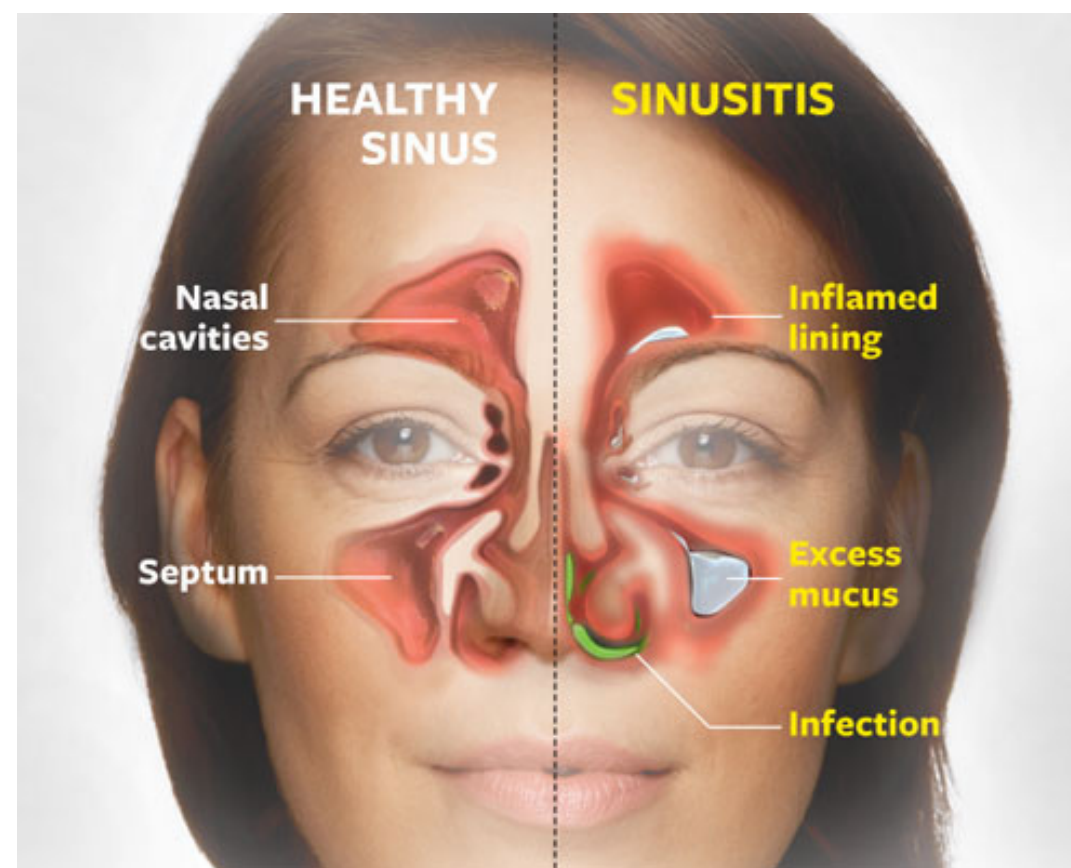
In **children**, symptoms may include: irritability, ear discomfort, snoring, mouth breathing, feeding difficulty and nasal speech.

The great news is that in the first instances treatments can be carried out by doing simple home remedies. The key is to **START** the treatment **BEFORE** the sinusitis gets worse. The treatments will help to relieve symptoms whilst waiting for your immune system to clear the infection.

These include the following:

- ✓ Start taking paracetamol or ibuprofen as soon as the symptoms start and this will usually **ease** any pain. They will also help to bring down any high temperature (fever) that you may have. Sometimes stronger painkillers such as codeine are needed for a short time.
- ✓ See the pharmacist to buy **nasal spray** such as 'Beconase'. The nasal sprays can help to reduce the swelling in your sinuses.
- ✓ Start taking **antihistamines** very early on, such as loratadine, cetirizine, piriton etc.
- ✓ Decongestant nasal sprays or drops are sometimes used. You can buy these from pharmacies. They may briefly relieve a blocked nose. However you should not use a decongestant spray or drops for more than 5-7 days at a time. If they are used for longer than this, they may cause a **worse rebound** congestion in the nose.
- ✓ Keeping **hydrated** can be helpful, so have plenty of drinks.
- ✓ Stop smoking. Reduce or cut out alcohol.
- ✓ Alternating between cold and warm face packs held over the sinuses may help to ease pain.
- ✓ Doing nasal douching. This is using **saline nasal drops** to relieve congestion and blockage in the nose.
- ✓ Steam inhalation with olbas oil can help. BUT be very careful not to scald/burn yourself.

It is only worth seeing the GP when you have tried all the above remedies and your sinusitis has persisted more than 1-2 weeks. In rare circumstances antibiotics might be needed or the strength of the steroid nasal spray might need to be changed.



Picture ref: pinterest.co.uk