

Sinusitis

Sinusitis is an inflammation of the sinuses. It is often started with an infection of the sinuses. Sinuses are small air pockets around the face and head.

Blocked sinuses can also be a problem, causing pain around the nose, ears, face and head. Blocked sinuses often result from changes in air pressure, such as flying or diving, or following a cold. During a cold there can be large mucous build ups and this can cause a blockage in the sinuses.

What are the Main Causes of Sinusitis?

- Allergies, especially hayfever.
- Infection.
- Dirty air, or air pollution.
- Common cold or flu.
- Mechanical changes to the nose/face e.g. following a broken nose or fracture to the face or jaw.
- Radical changes in air pressure.

What are the Symptoms of Sinusitis?

- Pressure around the face, eyes, cheeks.
- Pain in the face.
- Headaches or a pressure in the head.
- Runny nose, wheezing, or streaming nose and eyes.
- Blocked ears or earache.

Treatment for Sinusitis

- Wait, and let it improve.
- Painkillers such as paracetamol.
- Ant-inflammatories such as naproxen.
- Antibiotics if your doctor feels there is a bacterial infection.
- Anti-histamines if your doctor feels there is an allergy present.

Does Therapy Work?

- Some people get success with therapy such as Indian head massage, reflexology, osteopathy and chiropractic, but success is not guaranteed.
- Therapy may be useful for chronic conditions of sinusitis where the medical approach is not working.
- Manual therapists may perform sinus drainage techniques, or address blockages in the neck or throat.
- Cranio-sacral therapists or cranial osteopaths might look for blockages in the flow of cerebro-spinal fluid.
- Acupuncture may help relieve symptoms.
- Conclusion: Therapy does work, but not in every case. It would be worth considering seeing a therapist if other mainstream medical approaches have failed.

Tips:

- Use the diving technique to clear air out of your sinuses (known as equalisation): pinch your nose, and gently blow air as if you were blowing your nose. If this doesn't work, try a little stronger. So pinch the nose again, and blow fairly firmly. This can create a popping and help clear blocked sinuses.
- Avoid polluted areas where you might inhale dust or dirt.
- Manage your hayfever or other allergies. Try local honey to prevent hayfever, and if possible avoid open grassland on hot days when pollen might be high. Also consider over-the-counter anti-histamines.
- Ask your therapist about sinus draining techniques.
- Ask your therapist about deep breathing techniques and nasal breathing techniques.
- Ventilate your home regularly, keep windows open if you dry clothes inside. Flats or apartments are very susceptible to becoming damp or collecting moisture, so keep them well aired.
- Try bromelain – it can help reduce inflammation in the nasal passages.
- Try papaya – its rich in vitamin C and can help the mucous.
- Steam rooms, located in some spa's, can be great for clearing the sinuses. Try to breathe in through your nose. Alternatively, a hot bowl of water and a towel over your head can help.
- Avoid alcohol, it can increase mucous production and give you a headache making symptoms feel worse.

