



## **Sinusitis**

### **What is sinusitis?**

Sinusitis is an inflammation of one or more of the sinus cavities. This can occur after a cold or upper respiratory infection. Sinusitis symptoms are similar to cold symptoms. However, sinusitis requires diagnosis and treatment by a doctor.

### **How do I know if it's sinusitis?**

If you experience facial pressure, frequent headaches, chronic cough, or nasal congestion that doesn't seem to go away, you may be experiencing sinusitis. Sinusitis resembles common cold symptoms but lasts for weeks or months with little or no improvement.

### **How do you treat it?**

Proper treatment of sinusitis requires diagnosis of the type of bacteria caused the infection. This is done by means of taking a small culture of the sinus fluid. After the type of bacteria is determined, an appropriate antibiotic can be administered. Another treatment, which may help alleviate symptoms is performing saline nasal washes 3-4 times per day. This helps wash away accumulated fluid in the sinuses. For some people sinusitis may become a frequent or chronic condition. For these individuals further testing may be required. This can include allergy tests, x-rays, or CT scans. Some individuals who have had chronic sinusitis develop a continual inflammation of the sinus mucosa. This is sometimes referred to as polyps. Polyps may be treated with nasal steroids to decrease the size. If the polyps do not respond to treatment, surgery may be required.

### **What type of surgery is done?**

The most common and least invasive sinus surgery performed in the United States today is functional endoscopic sinus surgery, FESS. In this surgery the surgeon uses endoscopes through the nose and enters the sinus cavity or cavities to remove polyps and inflammatory tissue. In many cases this is accompanied by a procedure called a septoplasty. A septoplasty is performed to widen the nasal passages and improve breathing. The surgery itself takes about 1-2 hours, but several weekly follow up cleanings are required to obtain optimal results. This follow up treatment is done in the surgeon's office.

### **Am I cured after this?**

For some individuals sinus surgery relieves all their symptoms, but for many chronic sinus patients it is a step in an ongoing treatment regimen. Medical therapy may be required for an extended period of time. Although surgery is successful in treating sinus conditions the need for repeat surgery is a possibility.