

How To Manage Acute Sinusitis and Post-Nasal Drip

Acute sinusitis is painful inflammation of the sinuses, which are air-filled pockets in the front of the skull, either side of the nose and above the eyebrows. The sinuses are lined with a membrane which can become inflamed when you develop a viral respiratory infection, or when you are allergic to something. When this inflammation occurs, excessive mucus is produced. The mucus can block the narrow openings to the sinuses, causing a build-up of pressure and therefore pain. Sometimes the mucus then becomes infected (it can turn yellow or green, bloodstained or brown). Infection causes even more pain, and occasionally fever.

Mucus from your sinuses can drip down the back of your throat (“postnasal drip”) leading to a sore throat or a chronic, irritating cough.

The way to treat sinusitis is to reduce the inflammation which is causing the mucus to be produced in the first place. If you do this, then any infection will normally settle very quickly.

The best way to get the sinusitis under control quickly is by using LOCAL treatments – straight in to the sinuses. Anything that you take by mouth, which has to go via your bloodstream to get to the sinuses, tends to be far less effective. Antibiotics are not normally needed.

The following will help to relieve sinus pain and pressure, and aid recovery from this debilitating condition. PLEASE NOTE – sinusitis is generally a THREE WEEK illness, you may need to continue these measures for at least three weeks, sometimes longer.

1. Make sure that you drink plenty of fluids – being well hydrated means that any mucus you produce is watery rather than thick and sticky. This helps it to drain away more easily and reduces the chance of the openings to the sinuses becoming blocked.
2. Use a sinus rinse or decongestant spray – there are a number of brands available but one of the easiest to use is the NEILMED range of products (all available over the counter without prescription). There is good evidence that rinsing out the nose (and therefore the openings to the sinuses) will clear away mucus and will also produce a healthier lining to your nose and sinuses with reduced inflammation. Try douching twice daily with NEILMED SINUS RINSE (bottle and sachets available from any pharmacy or online) or use NEILMED NASAMIST, or for severe cases NEILMED EXTRA STRENGTH hypertonic spray.
3. After using the sinus rinse or spray, blow your nose to clear all the mucus.
4. After blowing your nose and clearing the mucus, use FLIXONASE (fluticasone) aqueous nasal spray: two squirts twice daily to each nostril during the early days of the problem, reducing to once daily as the symptoms subside. Flixonase is available over the counter. It is now preferred to Beconase as it is less likely to get into your bloodstream and therefore has a better safety profile.
5. You may find it helpful to use steam inhalations in the early days of the sinusitis as this helps to open up the sinuses and allow mucus to drain. You can add a few drops of menthol and eucalyptus or Olbas oil to the water as this can be soothing.

6. Ibuprofen – this is an excellent anti-inflammatory painkiller which will relieve the pain of sinus congestion, you can take 400mg three times a day after food.
7. Warm drinks – honey and lemon can be soothing and contains vitamin C which helps support your immune system to fight infection.

We no longer recommend decongestants such as ephedrine drops as these are no longer readily available, and they only work for a limited amount of time and can lead to worsening problems after more than 5 days use.

Both Neilmed and Flixonase can be continued long term if necessary – if you suffer from allergies then you may find that this keeps your symptoms well controlled and that you get fewer flare-ups of sinusitis.

Some people find that if they use sinus rinses and nasal steroids at the first sign of a cold or upper respiratory tract infection, they can prevent sinusitis from taking hold.

PLEASE NOTE: the majority of people who use nasal steroids sprays are not using them correctly! Please watch this excellent video which demonstrates the correct method:

[How to use nasal sprays correctly - Avoid the side effects and boost effectiveness](#)

[Copy this link below to web browser to watch the video](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOhmsn4gQMM&t=129s>

