VALLEYHEALTH

Sinusitis: What You Need to Know

According to the American Academy of Otolaryngology (AAO), sinusitis is an inflammation of the sinuses and nasal cavity that can be caused by viruses or bacteria.

Three Types of Sinusitis

Sinusitis occurs when your sinuses get irritated and inflamed. This can be caused by:

- **Acute sinusitis:** A temporary swelling of the sinuses that lasts less than four weeks. It's often caused by a cold or other respiratory illness, and symptoms usually go away within 10 days.
- **Subacute sinusitis:** A sinus infection that lasts between 4 and 12 weeks.
- **Chronic sinusitis:** A sinus infection that lasts more than 12 weeks or keeps coming back. It can be caused by long-term sinus inflammation.

What Causes Sinusitis?

Sinusitis can occur when the sinuses become infected, causing the lining to swell and block drainage. Symptoms include facial pressure, nasal congestion, thick nasal discharge, and postnasal drip.

To prevent sinusitis, you can:

- Avoid smoking and second-hand smoke
- Avoid allergens like dust, mold, pollen, and animal dander
- Wash your hands often
- Eat well and drink lots of water

How to Treat Sinusitis

To ease sinus pain and pressure, you can try:

- Taking acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or naproxen
- Avoiding temperature extremes
- Avoiding bending forward with your head down

When to Seek Medical Care

You should seek immediate medical care if you experience:

- Pain, swelling, or redness around the eyes
- High fever
- Confusion
- Double vision or other vision changes
- Stiff neck

Sinusitis can be uncomfortable, but it usually isn't serious. With proper care, most people recover fully. If you have frequent or long-lasting sinus problems, talk to your doctor at Valley Health about ways to find relief.