

AHRQ Safety Program for Telemedicine: Improving Antibiotic Use

Acute Sinusitis – Patient Guide for Children and Adults

What is a sinus infection or “acute sinusitis”?

- A sinus infection is when your sinuses swell, which can make you feel sick. It can cause:
 - A stuffy nose
 - Yellow, green, or clear mucus nasal drainage
 - Fever
 - Headache
 - Pain or pressure in your ear, face, or upper teeth
- Viruses cause most sinus infections.



What should I do to feel better?

- There is no specific treatment for a viral sinus infection, but treating the symptoms can help you feel better as your body clears the infection.
- Take pain medicines such as acetaminophen (commonly known as Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (commonly known as Advil® or Motrin®). Store brands are just as good as name brands. Follow the instructions on the package.
- Use a saline (saltwater) nose spray.
- Take decongestants if you are older than 12 years of age, if advised by your healthcare provider.
- If your healthcare provider is concerned that you may have bacterial sinusitis and advises you to take an antibiotic, take antibiotics as recommended.

When will I feel better?

- Most sinus infections last 7 to 10 days.

Contact your healthcare provider if:

- You have a fever of over 102 degrees Fahrenheit that does not get better with medicine.
- You have been getting worse over the course of 3 days.
- Your symptoms get better and then worse.
- You do not feel better after 10 days.
- Go to the emergency department if you develop severe headache, vision changes, confusion, or weakness on one side of the body, or other symptoms that concern you.

This document is intended to provide health-related information so that you may be better informed. It is not a substitute for your healthcare provider's medical advice and should not be relied upon for treatment for specific medical conditions.

Directions for Adding Your Logo to Your Document

If you chose to add a logo to this document, you can place it in the footer, below the article development content.

Steps:

1. Open the footer section (either double click in the footer section of the document or go to the “Insert” tab → select the drop-down menu for “Footer” → and click on “Edit Footer”).
2. Make sure your cursor is below the bottom line (or wherever you want your logo).
3. Go to the “Insert” tab.
4. Click on “Pictures” from the “Insert” tab.
5. A window will pop up so you can search your computer for the logo. Select your logo (.jpg or .png format) and click the insert button.
6. Your logo will appear in your footer. If you are happy with the placement, skip step 7.
7. ** If you want to move the logo image around, click on the logo → go to the “Format” tab → click on the “Wrap Text” drop-down menu → and select “In front of text.” This formatting will allow you to move the logo freely around the screen.
8. When you are satisfied with the placement of the logo, exit the footer section (either double click outside of the footer area or go to the “Design” tab → and click the “Close header and footer” button).