

## CHRONIC SINUSITIS

Chronic rhinosinusitis is an inflammatory disease of the sinuses diagnosed clinically and confirmed with CT sinuses. It is as much inflammation as it is infection of the sinuses and it can develop over a period of months or even years

CS can be caused by

allergies  
physical blockage (adenoids, septum deformity)  
immune deficiency  
perhaps GERD can play a role

You might need to

get skin testing  
see ENT or have surgery  
have labs done to check immune function  
rule out other causes

It can then cause

chronic cough  
difficult to treat asthma  
recurrent sinusitis episodes

Symptoms do not necessarily include fever or green drainage.

In fact, many patients are surprised their sinuses are full – all they have is a chronic cough.

There can be recurrent headaches, sinus pressure headaches or episodes of acute sinusitis that tend to occur soon after discontinuation of a short course of antibiotics.

Chronic sinusitis typically develops over months to years as chronic cough, nasal blockage or hard to treat asthma.

Chronic sinusitis can wax and wane over years without completely going away unless treated.

Patients with nasal allergies are predisposed to chronic sinusitis as the drainage port of the sinuses becomes blocked when the swelling occurs high up in the nasal cavity. If the drainage is blocked, then mucus, congestion, debris and infection accumulate slowly. The lining of the sinuses becomes thickened, swollen, inspissated with overgrowth of bacteria.

Some patients have an anatomic or physical blockage and do require sinus surgery.

Some patients have an impaired immune system contributing to chronic sinusitis.

Chronic sinusitis and GERD are two of the more common underlying and silent conditions which can cause or worsen asthma.

Allergies can exacerbate chronic sinusitis (which is often undetected and undiagnosed), which can worsen asthma. Treatment of chronic sinusitis can dramatically improve asthma symptoms.

Therapy for chronic sinusitis involves a course of antibiotics often with decongestants, saline nasal lavage treatments, nasal steroid sprays and nasal antihistamine sprays for several months.

In addition to this, treatment of the allergies needs to be addressed as it can be an inciting cause in many cases. Aggressive medical treatment can sometimes prevent the need for sinus surgery.

Chronic sinusitis is an inflammatory and congestion problem as much as it is an infection and can require months of nasal medications after the antibiotics are completed to regain full normal function of sinus epithelium.

- Antibiotics
- Nasal lavage twice daily, perhaps with added steroids
- Nasal corticosteroids/antihistamines
- Decongestants, oral and as topical initially
- Anti-inflammatories
- Topical nasal antibiotics
- Prednisone may be required initially to decrease inflammation