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The reality facing sinusitis!

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Sinusitis can be caused by common colds, allergies, nasal polyps, or a crooked nose bone blocking the nose.



The human skull is like a shell made of thin bones containing cavities. Some of these cavities are occupied by structures like the brain, eyes, ears, nose, while others are air filled spaces that communicate with the nose through tiny windows. These air-filled spaces called sinuses make the head light and cause an echo effect which gives volume to the human voice, similar to speaking into an earthenware pot.

Sinusitis is a process by which the soft lining of the sinuses gets swollen and angry and the tiny windows to the nose get blocked leading to fluid being produced and collecting in the sinuses. This fluid gets infected by bacteria and viruses.

Diagnosis

Made by history of the illness combined with an examination by a doctor confirmed by CT scans or X-ray's mucus cultures and if required an endoscopy procedure using a tiny camera and lights, to look into the nose.

Treatment

Medical treatment by antibiotics, antiallergics, painkillers, nasal drops and sprays and if required steroids and immunoglobulins to boost immunity. The selection of medications and dosages of each will vary depending on the doctor's assessment of the case. Selmef dication with over the counter prescriptions can often worsen acute sinutisis or make it chronic.

Self help

- Avoiding anything known to cause you allergies including foods, deo sprays, air fresheners and other strong- smelling compounds that irritate the nose.
- Steam inhalation which can even be done by running a hot shower after a bath and sitting in the steam for some time for those who find it difficult to do inhalations.
- Avoid smoking and drinking or reduce as much as possible
- Drink warm soups and fluids to help thin out the mucus
- Walk 15 minutes a day or deep breathing exercises morning and evening to increase airflow through the nose and sinuses.
- Avoid sitting under a fan with wet hair or in front of an air conditioner.

When is surgery indicated

If medical treatments fail repeatedly and a blockage of the windows into the sinuses or a crooked nose bone or polyps are found on examination endoscopic sinus surgery and septoplasty or a new technique called balloon sinuplasty are indicated. Patients can resume work in two to five days after surgery.

What happens if sinusitis is not treated

It may resolve or become chronic or may progress to complications like infection of the brain and skull bones or the sockets of the eyes leading to visual disturbances, which makes treatment longer, more expensive and surgical correction more extensive.

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