

Nasal congestion is a very common complaint and can have many different causes, including inflammation inside the nose due to allergies, or structural abnormalities such as a deviated nasal septum, turbinate blockage, or nasal polyps. Primary symptoms of rhinosinusitis, commonly known as sinusitis, may include:

- Runny nose
- Post-nasal drip
- Nasal obstruction or blockage
- Facial pressure or pain (usually not sharp)
- Dental pain
- Thick yellow/green mucus (colored mucus can be from many causes, including infection, acid reflux, environmental pollution, and dryness)
- Loss of smell
- Sinus headache (not as common)
- Whole-body ache is less common in sinus disease, particularly for those suffering from chronic sinusitis

If nasal congestion is affecting your quality of life and you are not responding to typical medical management with saline and corticosteroid nasal sprays or allergy treatment, it is recommended that you see an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON CAUSES OF SINUS DISEASE?

The average adult has two to three colds per year. They are most frequently caused by rhinovirus, and the common cold typically lasts for seven to 10 days. If cold symptoms last for more than seven to 10 days and/or symptoms worsen prior to seven days, there may be a bacterial infection often requiring antibiotics.

Acute sinus infections (symptoms lasting less than a month) are usually caused by viral upper respiratory infections (URI) and occasionally from bacterial infections. Chronic sinus disease (symptoms lasting an extended period of time) is a more complex inflammatory disorder that has multiple associated risk factors. These include asthma, aspirin sensitivity, environmental allergies, smoking, environmental or occupational irritants or pollutants, cystic fibrosis,

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SINUS DISEASE AND DISORDERS

Treatment options may vary depending on how long the symptoms have been present or how severe they are. Other conditions that can be confused with chronic rhinosinusitis (CRS), lasting three months or longer, can include:

- Perennial allergic rhinitis
- Vasomotor rhinitis
- Migraine or other primary headaches such as tension headache, cluster headache, etc.
- Temporo-Mandibular Joint (TMJ) disorders

For patients experiencing chronic symptoms of nasal obstruction and congestion, nasal drainage, facial pressure, and/or decreased smell that are not responding to medications or other treatments, a more thorough exam by an ENT specialist is recommended.