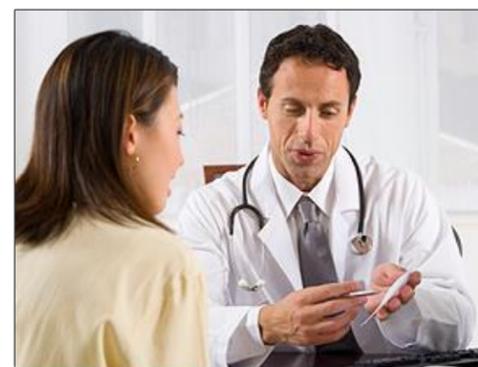




# COLD, ALLERGIES OR SINUS INFECTION?



## **Common cold**

Every year, approximately 30 million Americans will suffer from the common cold. Most colds have multiple symptoms, including sore throat, nasal congestion, runny nose and cough. These symptoms rarely last more than 10 to 14 days. If they persist, then the cold may have developed into an acute bacterial sinusitis (sinus infection). The common cold will resolve without the use of antibiotics more than 98 percent of the time.

## **Allergy**

Allergy symptoms can be similar to those of the common cold, but people rarely feel as sick, and the symptoms usually recur in the same seasons each year. Key warning signs that your symptoms are not from your allergies include fever, body aches, yellow or green nasal discharge and malaise.

## **Sinusitis (sinus infection)**

Sinusitis means inflammation (swelling) and infection in the paranasal sinuses (the air-filled bony cavities around our head and face). When the openings that lead from the sinuses into the nose get inflamed or infected, mucus and bacteria may back up in the sinus and cause sinusitis. Facial pressure, facial pain and dental pain are among the most specific symptoms. Sinusitis is relatively uncommon compared with the common cold. Only about one to two percent of those with a common cold will fail to clear and result in sinusitis. Sinusitis may resolve on its own but will usually require antibiotics and other medications such as decongestants. Saline irrigations and nasal steroids are also helpful treatments for sinusitis.

## **Chronic sinusitis**

There are also people who suffer with recurrent episodes of sinusitis and are diagnosed with chronic sinusitis. Before now, there were two options to treat this condition—antibiotics or sinus surgery, which calls for bone and tissue removal to open blocked passageways. Although this technique can remove the diseased tissue and has shown to be effective, it can also leave behind scarring. There is now a less invasive approach available in certain situations that is quick, practically painless, and there is no need to stay in the hospital overnight. It's called balloon sinuplasty. This technique involves your physician placing a balloon catheter through your nostril into the blocked sinus passageway. The balloon is inflated to restructure and dilate the passageway in order to restore normal sinus function. With traditional surgery, it can take months for the sinus lining to become functional again. With the balloon method, patients can return to normal activities within 48 hours.