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# The Doctor Is In

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## Acute Sinusitis

Cold weather viruses are here and everywhere you go, someone has a runny nose. Green discharge does not necessarily mean bacterial infection. When do you know that your simple cold has turned into something else?

The AAP's guideline on management of sinusitis defines acute bacterial infection as an infection of the paranasal sinuses lasting less than 30 days presenting with either persistent or severe symptoms. Persistent symptoms are defined as nasal or postnasal discharge, and/or daytime cough. Severe symptoms are defined as temperature of at least 102 degrees Fahrenheit and persistent nasal discharge present for at least three to four consecutive days.

Children have six to eight upper respiratory infections (URIs) a year. URI's are a common precursor to acute bacterial sinusitis. Uncomplicated viral URI's generally last five to seven days. Respiratory symptoms may continue through the tenth day, but have usually peaked and are on the road to recovery. Respiratory symptoms that have not improved during the course of illness suggest acute sinusitis. If fever is present during an URI, it is usually in the beginning and lasts approximately 48-72 hours. After the fever resolves, the respiratory symptoms worsen. Nasal discharge in uncomplicated URI's can remain green several days into the illness. However, presentation with high fever and purulent nasal discharge for at least three to four consecutive days helps to define the severe presentation of acute bacterial sinusitis.

Antibiotics do not shorten the course or treat viral URI's. However, if acute bacterial sinusitis is diagnosed, antibiotics may be appropriate.



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