



# Guidelines for Management of Common Cold and Sinusitis

**Problem:** Common Cold in otherwise Healthy Children

**Diagnosis:** Signs & Symptoms include

- Rhinorrhea
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Fever

**Did You Know:**

- Mucopurulent rhinitis (thick, opaque or discolored nasal discharge)
  - \* frequently accompanies the common cold
  - \* IS NOT an indication for antibiotics unless it persists for >10 -14 days
- In children with viral URI, antibiotics DO NOT
  - \* prevent illness
  - \* shorten the duration of illness
- Radiographs of sinuses are frequently positive in common colds

**Recommended Action:**

- Reassure and educate parents
- Suggest over-the-counter remedies for relief of symptoms
- Advise parent to return if symptoms do not resolve

**Problem:** Sinusitis in otherwise Healthy Children

**Diagnosis:**

- Prolonged nonspecific upper respiratory signs & symptoms (i.e. rhinosinusitis & cough) without improvement for >10-14 days
- OR
- More severe upper respiratory symptoms:  
fever  $\geq 39^{\circ}\text{C}$  facial swelling & pain

**Did You Know:**

- Even with strict application of diagnostic criteria, some children will be treated with antibiotics who do not need them
- Color & character of nasal discharge DOES NOT predict isolation of bacterial pathogen
- Radiographs may be indicated when
  - \* episodes of sinusitis are recurrent
  - \* complications are suspected

**Recommended Action:**

- Amoxicillin for 10-14 days
- Advise parents to return for re-evaluation if symptoms do not improve within 72 hours

## West Virginia Physicians for Wise Use of Antibiotics

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For more complete guidance:  
Pediatrics 1998; 101: 181-184