

West Virginia Physicians for Wise Use of Antibiotics

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Common Cold

Sinusitis



What causes the common cold?

Colds, "the common cold," are caused by viruses.

What causes sinusitis or acute sinusitis?

Sinuses are spaces within the bones of the face, especially the cheeks and forehead, and they produce mucus that helps filter the air you breathe. Sinusitis occurs when the lining of the sinuses becomes irritated and swollen, and mucus becomes trapped in the sinuses. Bacteria "can make themselves at home" in the trapped mucus, causing an infection known as acute sinusitis.

How do you tell the difference between a cold and acute sinusitis?

A cold usually starts with your child feeling tired, sneezing, coughing, a runny nose and maybe a slight fever. Your child may also experience muscle aches, a scratchy or sore throat and a headache. Colds will go away on their own in about 7-10 days. **Antibiotics WILL NOT help your child feel better.**

When your child has acute sinusitis, he/she may have a cold that has lasted longer than 2 weeks, and:

- fever OR
- face pain and swelling around the eyes OR
- a cough that gets worse

What can be done for a cold?

The best treatment for a cold is patience/time.

- Offer plenty of fluids and popsicles
- Give your child extra rest/sleep



Antibiotics: Wise Use, Not Overuse!!!



... for a cold?

- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for slight fever or headache

What can be done for acute sinusitis?

Your doctor will prescribe **an antibiotic for acute sinusitis**. Follow the instructions for taking the medicine.

What else should I know?

Disease-causing bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics when antibiotics are used improperly or overused. Antibiotic resistant bacteria are **harder** to kill, and pose serious health threats to your child & others. Some illnesses caused by resistant bacteria must be treated in the hospital, and some resistant bacteria cannot be treated at all.

Can I help stop resistant bacteria?

- Talk with your doctor... ask if your illness is caused by bacteria or viruses
- Let your doctor decide when antibiotics are necessary and useful
- Take antibiotics as directed
- Throw away any unused antibiotics
- Prevent infections... wash hands with soap & warm water to stop spread of bacteria & viruses
- Protect your children from cigarette smoke