



Is It a Cold, Allergy, or Sinusitis?

Have you ever had a cold or allergy attack that wouldn't go away? If so, there's a good chance you actually had sinusitis. Experts estimate that 37 million people are afflicted with sinusitis each year, making it one of the most common health conditions in America. That number may be significantly higher, since the symptoms of bacterial sinusitis often mimic those of colds or allergies, and many sufferers never see a doctor for proper diagnosis and treatment.

What are the symptoms of sinusitis vs. a cold or allergy?

SIGN/ SYMPTOM	SINUSITIS	ALLERGY	COLD
Nasal Discharge	Cloudy or colored	Clear, thin, watery	Thick, whitish
Nasal Congestion	Often	Sometimes	Yes
Facial Pressure /Pain/Fullness	Often	Sometimes	Sometimes
Duration of Illness	10 days or longer	Varies	Under 10 days
Double-worsening*	Sometimes	No	No
Fever	Sometimes	No	Sometimes
Pain in Upper Teeth	Sometimes	No	No
Bad Breath	Sometimes	No	No
Coughing	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes
Sneezing	No	Sometimes	Yes

*Initial improvement followed by worsening within the first 10 days

Because the symptoms of sinusitis sometimes mimic those of colds and allergies, you may not realize you need to see a doctor. If you suspect you have sinusitis, review these signs and symptoms. If you suffer from three or more, you should see your doctor. Visit www.entnet.org for more information on ear, nose, and throat health.