



### Rhinosinusitis - what causes it?

An acute rhinosinusitis concerns an inflammation of the nasal mucous membrane (rhinitis) including that of the paranasal sinuses. This illness frequently occurs during the common cold season and is usually caused by viruses. Frontal sinuses, maxillary sinuses, ethmoidal sinuses and sphenoid sinuses belong to the paranasal sinus. These air filled cavities in the facial bones are connected to the nasal area. Rhinosinusitis often affects not only one; but several paranasal sinuses. The maxillary sinuses are affected in around 90% of the patients, the ethmoidal sinuses are affected in more than 75% of the patients and the frontal sinuses affected in 40% of the patients. An inflammation of the sphenoid sinus is rare with 27% patients affected by it.

### What are the symptoms of rhinosinusitis?

A blocked, runny nose and mild anosmia are common symptoms that are experienced at the onset of rhinosinusitis. Besides this, a feeling of congestion in the face as well as pressure and pain in the upper jaw and in the forehead that increases while bending and in case of tremor is also felt. Fatigue and fever may also occur. But the presence of all symptoms simultaneously is not required for the diagnosis of rhinosinusitis. Acute rhinosinusitis is cured in 60-80% of patients within two weeks even without treatment and in 90% of the patients after six weeks at the latest. If this common cold persists for more than 8 weeks or if it occurs more than three times in a year, then it represents chronic rhinosinusitis, which requires the consultation of a doctor.

### How does rhinosinusitis develop?

Rhinosinusitis begins mostly with catarrh. In case of such rhinitis, the nasal mucous membranes swell and increase the production of watery to viscous mucus that is typical of common cold. Thus the ventilation of the paranasal sinuses and the discharge of the secretion formed there are affected. This once again makes it easier for pathogenic agents to advance in the mucous membranes of the paranasal sinuses. Acute rhinosinusitis is mainly caused by common cold viruses, whereas it is rarely caused by bacteria.

### How is rhinosinusitis treated?

Difficult courses or threatening complications may require antibiotic treatment. Apart from a few rare cases, a paranasal sinus inflammation gets cured even without medicines. Taking rest and avoiding stress, getting adequate sleep and drinking adequate quantity of fluids supports the body in the healing process. A painkiller helps to relieve severe pain. Many patients feel better after steam inhalation and the inhalation of essential oils such as eucalyptol. Herbal supplements such as Myrtol and Gentiana extracts can also alleviate the symptoms. Anticongestive nasal drops and sprays as well as nasal douches help the patients to breathe more freely. It is advisable to use these medicines mainly in the evening so that the patient can sleep peacefully at night. They should be used for a maximum of seven days at a stretch so as to avoid damaging the sensitive nasal mucous membrane.