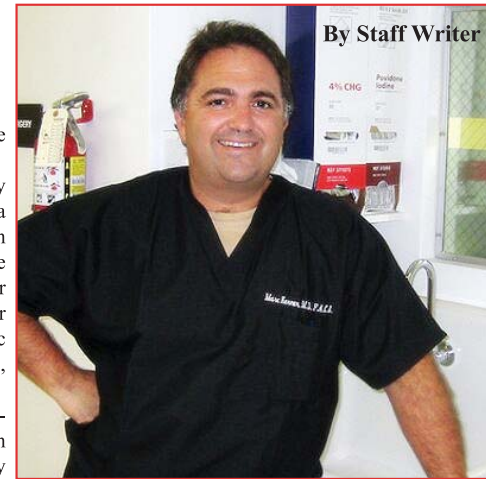




Marc Kerner, MD, FACS Answers Questions on Sinusitis

By Staff Writer



When is a cold actually sinusitis?
The majority of sinus infections are caused by bacteria that become trapped in blocked sinuses. Bacteria flourish in the sinuses creating symptoms of runny nose, congestion, facial pain & pressure. Sinus infections are usually preceded by a cold or allergy attack, which contributes to sinus blockage. It can worsen by exposure to environmental pollutants.

Unlike colds or allergies, bacterial sinusitis requires a physician's diagnosis and treatment with antibiotics to cure the infection and prevent future complications.

Normally, mucus collecting in the sinuses drains into the nasal passages. When people have a cold or allergy attack, sinuses become inflamed and unable to drain, leading to congestion and repeated infections. Diagnosis of acute sinusitis usually is based on physical examination and discussion of your symptoms. X-rays of your sinuses or a

sample of your nasal discharge is used to test for bacteria.

When Acute Becomes Chronic Sinusitis?

When you have frequent sinus infections, or the infection lasts three months or more, you most likely suffer from chronic sinusitis. Symptoms of chronic sinusitis may be less severe than those of acute sinusitis; however, untreated chronic sinusitis can cause damage to the sinuses and can require surgery to correct the blockage and relieve the symptoms.

What are treatment options?

Bacterial sinusitis: Therapy for bacterial sinusitis includes appropriate antibiotics. In addition, oral or nasal spray or drop decongestants may be recommended to relieve congestion.

We do not recommend prolonged use of nonprescription nasal sprays or drops. Inhaling steam or using saline nasal sprays or

irrigations are effective to relieve sinus discomfort.

Diagnosis can be made by looking into the nasal cavity with a small endoscope and if necessary an x-ray scan of the sinuses can be taken. If it is determined that your sinus passages are narrowed or blocked leading to symptomatic sinus infections or chronic sinusitis, there are now a number of state-of-the-art options to correct this condition. The latest is Balloon Sinuplasty, which is a minimally invasive procedure for patients suffering from sinus blockage. The procedure is performed in the office under local anesthesia and allows patients rapid recovery. The technology for this procedure was adopted from angioplasty in which small balloon catheters are used to dilate either blocked vessels, or in the case of sinuses,

blocked drainage pathways. Minimally invasive surgery is also available to correct anatomic deformities, which lead to obstruction of the sinuses.

For more information on Dr Marc Kerner please visit www.calwestent.com or call 818-349-0600

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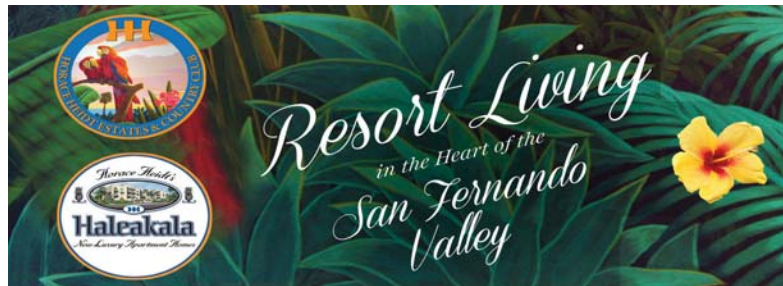
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