

# CAREFUL ANTIBIOTIC USE

When parents request antibiotics for rhinitis or the "common cold"... Give them an explanation, not a prescription.

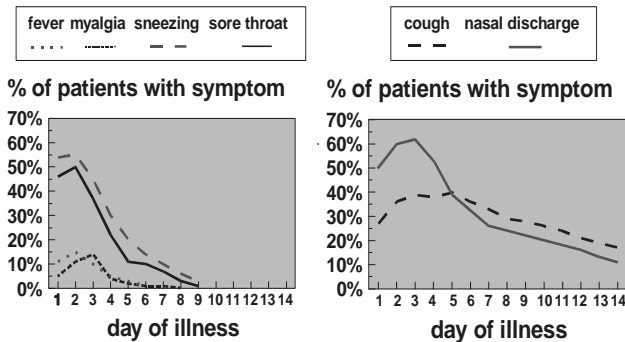
## RHINITIS VERSUS SINUSITIS IN CHILDREN<sup>1</sup>

### Remember:

Children have 2-9 viral respiratory illnesses per year.<sup>2</sup>

In uncomplicated colds, cough and nasal discharge may persist for 14 days or more – long after other symptoms have resolved

Duration of symptoms in 139 rhinovirus colds<sup>3</sup>



Controlled studies do not support antibiotic treatment of mucopurulent rhinitis.<sup>4</sup>

Antibiotics do not effectively treat URI, or prevent subsequent bacterial infections.<sup>5</sup>

### Don't overdiagnose sinusitis

Though most viral URIs involve the paranasal sinuses, only a small minority are complicated by bacterial sinusitis.

**Avoid unnecessary treatment by using strict criteria for diagnosis:<sup>5</sup>**

Symptoms of rhinorrhea or persistent day-time cough lasting more than 10 - 14 days without improvement.

or

Severe symptoms of acute sinus infection:

- fever (> 39 C) with purulent nasal discharge
- facial pain or tenderness
- periorbital swelling

### Treating sinusitis:

#### ■ Target likely organisms with first-line drugs:

Amoxicillin, Amoxicillin/Clavulanate<sup>6</sup>

#### ■ Use shortest effective course:

Should see improvement in 2-3 days. Continue treatment for 7 days after symptoms improve or resolve (usually a 10 - 14 day course).<sup>7</sup>

#### ■ Consider imaging studies in recurrent or unclear cases:

But remember that some sinus involvement is frequent early in the course of uncomplicated viral URI - so interpret studies with caution.

**Share the CDC/AAP principles and pamphlets with parents to help them understand when antibiotic treatment risks outweigh the benefits.**

- rhinorrhea, fever, and cough are symptoms of viral URI
- changes in mucous to yellow, thick, or green are the natural course of viral URI, NOT an indication for antibiotics.<sup>8</sup>
- treating viral URI will not shorten the course of illness or prevent bacterial infection.<sup>5</sup>

### References

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