What is Sinusitis?

Sinusitis occurs when the sinuses become swollen or infected. The sinuses are the hollow spaces in the skull above the eyebrows, between the eyes and under your cheek bones.

The sinuses are lined with mucus membranes that create a watery fluid called mucus. Mucus plays a role in our immune system by trapping airborne particles, such as dust and bacteria.

Colds, flu, allergies and air pollution can make the mucus membranes swell. The mucus becomes thick, decreasing drainage from the sinuses. The result is often painful pressure within the face.
When to see a provider:
Antibiotics may be needed to treat a bacterial infection of the sinuses. It is recommended to seek professional advice if you experience the following:

- Home treatments, or over-the-counter treatments, do not relieve symptoms after 5 days.
- Cold symptoms do not get better after 10-14 days, or get better and then worse again.
- Facial pain or headaches do not subside with pain relievers.
- Your vision is impaired or you notice swelling around the eyes.
- After 5-7 days, your mucus darkens.
- You have a fever for 3-5 days.

Prevention
- If you have allergies, taking daily allergy medications or antihistamines before exposure to allergens, can help prevent sinusitis. Using a neti pot in the shower on a daily basis may also be helpful.
- Stop smoking.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Wash hands often to avoid exposure to virus and bacteria.
- Take care of yourself when you start to feel ill, with rest, fluids and decongestants.
- Getting a flu shot may prevent sinusitis due to influenza.