

Guidance for Pharmacy Staff - Acute Sinusitis

What is an acute Acute Sinusitis?

Sinusitis is swelling of the sinuses, and common symptoms are listed in section 3 of the Patient Checklist. It can be caused by infection and most people get better within 2-3 weeks without the need for antibiotics.

Self-care key points:

Drinking plenty of fluids and getting plenty of rest • Over-the-counter products such as painkillers or decongestants • Cleaning nose with a saltwater solution

Please advise patients that topical nasal decongestant sprays should not be used for more than 7 consecutive days, as prolonged use can cause rebound congestion and may worsen symptoms.

3-step guide for pharmacy teams

Step 1 – Safety first

Before you provide the patient with the Patient Checklist to complete, check for any red flag symptoms*:

- Non-blanching rash (a rash that does not disappear with pressure)
- Drowsiness
- Neck stiffness
- Sensitivity to light and / or reduced vision (other conditions relating to the eye area of eye(s))

Signpost patient to Pharmacist/A&E or phone 999 in an emergency.



Step 2 – Ask patient to complete checklist

To support the over-the-counter conversation please see below.



A. What's new (gateway)

! No longer needs patients to have symptoms for ten days

Gateway is reached in patients presenting with:

Nasal blockage OR nasal discharge

PLUS at least one of: 1. facial pain/headache 2. loss of smell 3. a cough

Step 3 - Patient checklist guidance – route correctly

Once the completed checklist is returned to you, use the following guidance on appropriate next steps.



If...	Do...
There are any ticks in Section 1	Not eligible → advise GP/urgent care as appropriate.
Section 2 -The patient has ticked that they have a nasal blockage OR runny nose AND at least one of the other 3 symptoms (Note: the patient no longer needs to have symptoms for 10 days now!)	Refer to the pharmacist. The patient may be eligible for management within the Pharmacy First service. This may result in advice, referral, OTC sale or PGD supply.
There are 2 or more ticks in section 3	Refer to pharmacist (the patient may need urgent onward referral)

Patient Checklist — Acute Sinusitis

Tick what applies and hand back to the pharmacy team.

You are being asked to complete this checklist as you have presented in the pharmacy wishing to access management for symptoms of sinusitis for either yourself or a child in your care. Please answer these questions carefully as this will help our colleagues to ensure you receive the most appropriate care. Please be assured our staff will treat this information confidentially.

Name: _____ DOB: ____/____/____ Date: ____/____/____

Section 1 — Eligibility / exclusions

☐	Under 12 years old.
☐	Is immunosuppressed
☐	Has chronic sinusitis (symptoms lasting for more than 12 weeks).
☐	Under the age of 16 years old and pregnant (or may be pregnant).

Section 2 — Pharmacy First Referral

☐	Nasal blockage OR runny nose.
Plus one of the below	
☐	Pain or pressure in the face or head.
☐	Reduction or loss in sense of smell (adults only).
☐	Cough during the day or at night (children only).

Section 3 — Symptoms requiring pharmacist assessment – Potential Red Flag Symptoms

☐	Has reduced vision.
☐	Has other conditions relating to the eye area or eye(s).
☐	Has swelling of the forehead.
☐	Has a severe headache.

For staff use: Referred to pharmacist ☐ Yes ☐ No Booked as Pharmacy First ☐ Yes ☐ No