

Steroid Treatment for Sinus Disease

Sinus inflammation can cause increased pressure/pain, nasal congestion and drainage, and even a decreased sense of smell and taste. Inflammation can also cause polyps to form. First line treatment for these conditions often involves use of topical nasal steroids, antihistamines, and irrigation. If this treatment fails, a course of oral steroids with or without antibiotics may be effective in improving symptoms.



What are steroids and how do they work?

Steroids are powerful anti-inflammatory agents used to decrease the swelling and inflammation associated with sinus disease. Please note that these steroids are different from the anabolic steroids used to build muscle. Steroids have some potential side effects that you should be aware of.

Possible risks and side effects include:

- Insomnia, restlessness
- Mood changes, psychosis, hallucinations
- Weight gain, facial puffiness
- High blood pressure, sweating
- High blood sugars resulting in coma (If you are diabetic, you will need close monitoring of your blood sugars and you may need to go on insulin during your therapy.)
- Cataracts causing blurry vision
- Lower seizure threshold in epilepsy
- Gastritis (heartburn or reflux)
- GI ulcers and bleeding
- Pancreatitis
- Skin thinning, impaired healing, easy bruising
- Muscle pains and weakness
- Avascular necrosis resulting in death of the hip or shoulder joint
- Osteoporosis, fractures
- Immunosuppression, opportunistic infections
- Failure to improve/respond

You must call your physician or seek medical attention at the ER for any of the following:

- Increased thirst, frequent drinking, frequent urination, blurred vision and confusion are all signs of increased blood sugar levels and would require that your blood sugars be tested. Blood sugar levels can rise to the point where you can go into a diabetic coma.
- If you begin to have hip or shoulder pains you will need to alert us immediately so that we can determine if you are having a rare but serious problem called avascular necrosis.
- If you begin to have hallucinations, problems thinking or confusion you could be experiencing a steroid induced psychosis. You will need to alert us immediately so that we can taper you safely off of the medications.
- DO NOT suddenly stop your steroids mid-therapy without consulting your physician. Otherwise, you may develop adrenal insufficiency, a condition where your body's own source of steroids is no longer produced, causing severe weakness, low blood pressure, low blood sugar, cardiac collapse, coma, and even death.

By signing below, I indicate that I have read and understand the above information regarding the risks and benefits of oral steroids. I understand that the alternative is treatment with topical steroids, sinus rinses, and possibly antibiotics and surgery. I have had all of my questions answered.

Patient Signature

Date