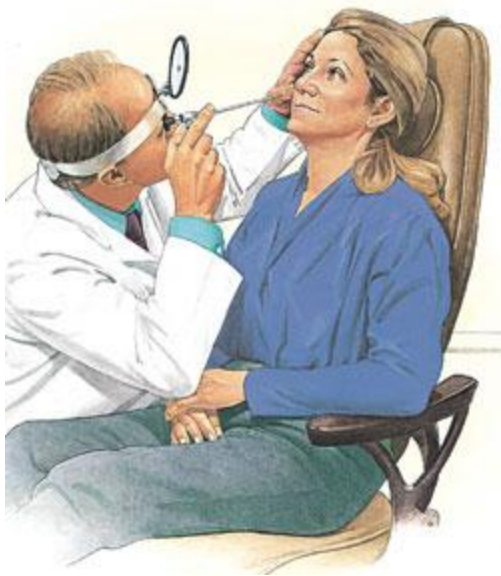


Evaluating Your Sinuses: History and Exam

A thorough evaluation helps your doctor decide whether your sinuses are causing a problem and, if so, helps uncover the cause. Your otolaryngologist is a doctor who specializes in this type of medical evaluation, which may include a medical history, a physical exam, and diagnostic tests such as x-rays.



Medical History

The goal of a medical history is to pinpoint your symptoms and their cause and to determine which types of treatment have worked well for you in the past. Your doctor may ask you questions about any signs of infection, such as chronic and yellow or greenish drainage or a decreased sense of smell. Signs of allergies include sneezing and red or itchy eyes or nose. Breathing through your mouth or nose on one side only may indicate a nasal obstruction. Be sure to mention any other medical problems you have and whether you take medications, supplements, or herbal remedies.

Physical and Endoscopic Exam

Your doctor may examine your ears and throat, then your nose, looking for a deviated septum, polyps, or signs of infection. Your doctor may use a tiny telescope (**endoscope**) to see around corners and into sinus openings. Endoscopic exams are done at your doctor's office. Your nose and sinuses are first treated with **anesthetic** (numbing medication) and a decongestant. This makes it easier to insert the endoscope. Your doctor then guides the endoscope into your nasal passages.

