

[IMAGE]

Abusing Antibiotics

Acute sinusitis is an inflammation of the membranes lining the sinuses. It affects perhaps 20 million adults and children a year and is among the most common childhood ailments for which antibiotics are routinely prescribed. Serious complications such as meningitis can occur, but are rare.

Despite guidelines that recommend their use when symptoms linger, antibiotics have little or no effect against most acute sinus infections in children. The most recent study to make this claim, published in *Pediatrics*, comes amid growing concern that the overuse of antibiotics is creating drug-resistant germs.

One hundred and sixty-one children, eight years old on average, were given one of two common penicillin-type drugs (amoxicillin) or dummy pills for two weeks. By the start of the third week, about 80 percent of the children in all three groups showed similar improvement.

Antimicrobial treatment offered no benefit in overall symptom resolution; duration of symptoms; recovery to usual functional status; days missed from school or childcare; or relapse and recurrence of sinus symptoms. The authors suggest that parents practice awareness, and doctors wait until symptoms have lasted at least three weeks before prescribing antibiotics.

Talk to your doctor of chiropractic about nonpharmaceutical alternatives for managing acute sinusitis and other childhood illnesses. For more information on childhood conditions, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/childhood.html>.

Reference:

Garbutt JM, Goldstein M, Gellman E, et al. A randomized, placebo-controlled trial of antimicrobial treatment for children with clinically diagnosed acute sinusitis. *Pediatrics* 2001;107(4), pp. 619-625.

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