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## **What Is a Sinus Headache?**

Sinus headache is often diagnosed if a person has pain in the forehead or about the nose, often with congestion or clear nasal discharge. However, although acute sinusitis can be associated with pain, most people with "sinus headache" actually have migraine. As a result of misdiagnosis, people who are treated for "recurrent sinus headache" often do not receive the most effective therapies.

The confusion is common; a migraine can cause irritation of nerves that have branches in the forehead, cheeks, and jaw. This may produce pain in or near the sinus cavities. Pain in the sinus area does not automatically mean that you have a sinus disorder. However, sinus and nasal passages can become inflamed, leading to a headache.

Results of a recent study presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Neurology revealed that a startling 97% of the participants, who were self-described sinus headache sufferers, actually had symptoms consistent with migraine attacks.

There are many reasons headache sufferers have difficulty distinguishing between a sinus headache and the pain of a migraine attack.

Although many people associate migraine with strange visual aura symptoms, only 20% of migraineurs actually experience the aura phase of a migraine attack. Both sinus headaches and migraine attacks can be triggered by weather changes. Sinus headaches and migraine attacks can produce pain in the same areas. Both can cause drainage and other sinus symptoms such as teary eyes. Acute or chronic sinusitis may be associated with pain, but this typically worsens if you lie down and improves with breathing moist air and use of warm and cool compresses.

Sinusitis due to an infection will often produce a discolored nasal discharge, fever and fluid in the sinus, visible on an X-ray.