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Too Many Sinus Infection Patients Are Prescribed Unnecessary and Potentially Dangerous Antibiotics

TAMPA, Fla. –Nov. 16, 2017 – A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that thousands of Americans are taking antibiotics that are unnecessary and potentially harmful. The report evaluated antibiotic use nationwide, using information from 17 different clinical studies. It found that an overwhelming number of doctors regularly overprescribe medication. A lot of the patients receiving those unnecessary drugs are those coming in with common upper respiratory conditions such as sinus infections. ***Most sinus infections do not require antibiotics.***

“Acute sinus infections are absolutely uncomfortable for the patient, and they come to their physician because symptoms can last for up to four weeks. However, the majority will improve and even clear on their own within one to two weeks without medications. Unnecessary prescriptions lead to more side effects and higher bacterial resistance rates,” said Scott Powell, M.D., a board-certified otolaryngologist with Florida E.N.T. & Allergy.

So, how do patients and their physicians know a condition requires more aggressive treatment? Dr. Powell says it is all about watching the symptoms.

“Potential complications from sinus infections are rare, but they do occur in about 15 percent of cases. When a patient has thick, colorful nasal discharge or facial pressure and pain for at least 10 days, they meet the criteria for an antibiotic treatment. A patient can also have what we call ‘double worsening’ where their symptoms go away and come back again even more aggressively. In those cases, the patient may also require a prescription,” said Dr. Powell.

There are also other non-invasive alternatives to prescriptions for patients experiencing chronic sinus infections and similar issues. Balloon Sinuplasty, for example, uses a small balloon catheter to open up the blocked sinus passageways and create drainage of the mucus that is building up.

“Doctors really need to discuss ‘watchful waiting’ with their patients’. Explain to them that symptoms normally clear up on their own with over-the-counter medications and things like nasal steroid sprays. If they have a patient that’s coming in over and over again with sinusitis, refer them to an ear, nose and throat specialist to discuss further care.”

For more information about Florida E.N.T. & Allergy call (813) 879-8045.

About Florida E.N.T. & Allergy:

The physicians of Florida E.N.T. & Allergy have served the Tampa Bay community for over 40 years. From pediatric allergies to fitting hearing aids, our caring and experienced physicians

specialize in ear, nose and throat care for the entire family using comprehensive, cutting-edge technologies.

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