

Southwest Allergy and Asthma Associates, P.A.
Joe Venzor, M.D. & Felix Barron, PA-C
11410 Vista Del Sol, Suite A, El Paso Texas 79936, (915) 592-6269
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Allergic Fungal Sinusitis

AFS is an allergic reaction caused by environmental fungi.

Presentation

Most patients present with a history of severe allergies and chronic sinusitis.
Symptoms unresponsive to antibiotics, antihistamines, nasal steroids, and allergy shots

Frequency

5-10% of patients affected by chronic sinusitis carry a diagnosis of AFS.
2/3 of patients report a history of allergic rhinitis
50% of patients had asthma.

Pathophysiology

How does AFS occur? First a patient is exposed to allergic fungi by breathing it in causing swelling of the nasal tissues. This blockage seals up the sinus openings causing low oxygen conditions which make fungi grow. The additional fungi make the allergy reaction even worse. Eventually thick peanut butter like mucus results which plugs up the sinuses even more.

Diagnosis

IgE elevated. This is the allergy antibody. We repeat the level every 6 months
Skin testing to fungi to show what is causing the reaction.
CT Sinus
Surgery to remove the thick mucus and fungi

Treatment

Nasal steroid spray
Surgery is required
Prednisone
Allergy injections: Helps to prevent future recurrences and control allergies
Nebulized anti-fungal medication