



Taryn Toomey's 'the class' Defies Classification
B3



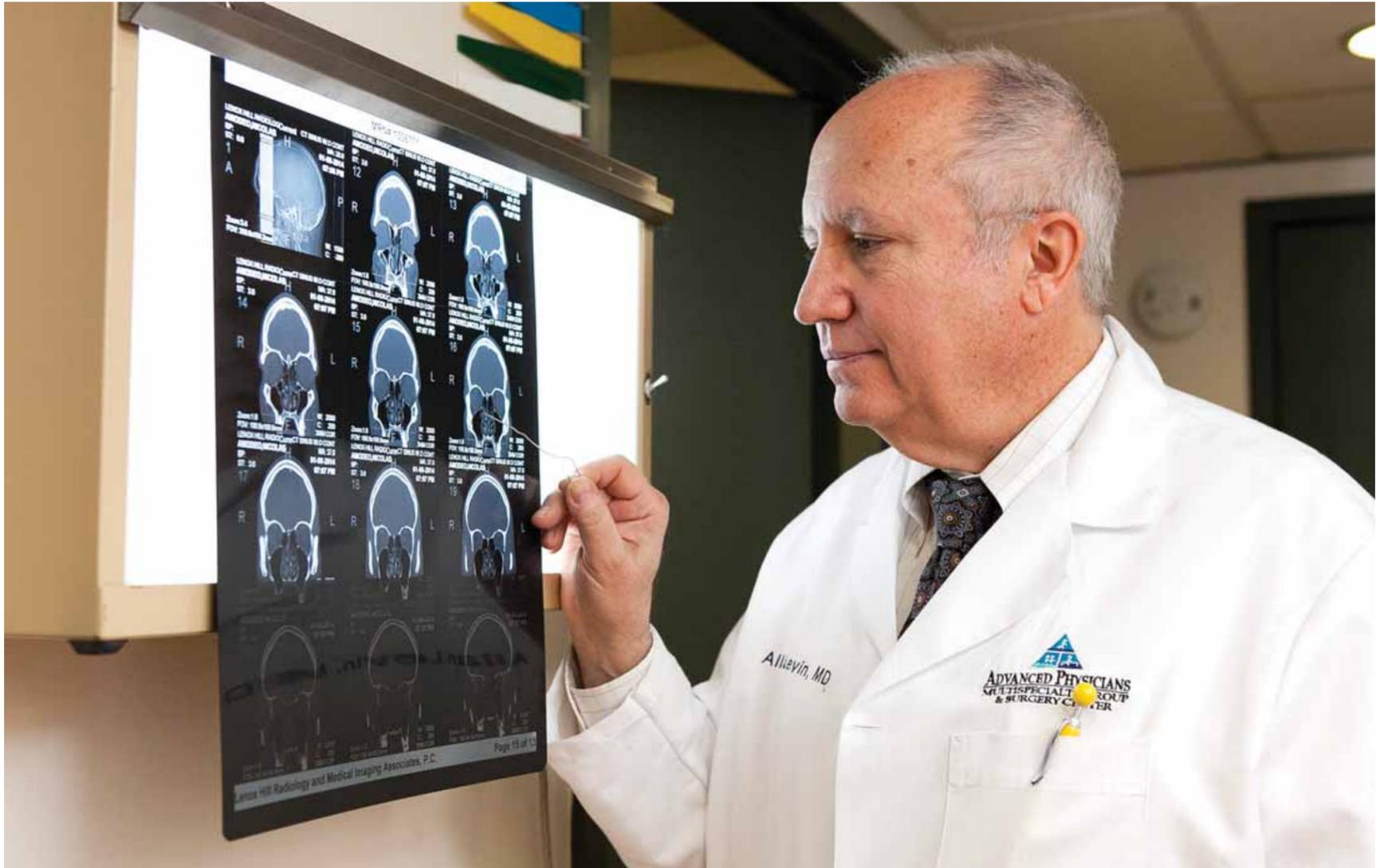
Origins of Plague
B4



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B5

Health & Fitness

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Dr. Allan Levin looks at a CT scan of a patient's sinuses. CT scans help him diagnose whether a patient has sinusitis and decide if surgery is needed.

Your Lingering Cold May Not Be a Cold at All

How to recognize and treat sinusitis

By June Fakkert
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—If your runny, stuffy nose and aching face have lasted more than 10 days, you may have something more than just the common cold.

Sinusitis, which is inflammation of the air-filled chambers behind your forehead, nose, and cheeks, often begins as a cold but can stealthily become a chronic disease without the sufferer realizing it because the symptoms can appear to improve.

Sinusitis can start when an allergic reaction or common viral cold sets the immune system on high alert and causes the body to produce extra mucus. As this mucus collects, it becomes the perfect habitat for bacteria to breed. The body responds to the bacteria colonies by sending immune cells to attack them, increasing inflammation and setting the stage for chronic sinusitis—if left untreated.

Luckily, unlike many other chronic conditions, sinusitis is very treatable after it

is diagnosed.

However, many sufferers (and non-specialist doctors) often misconstrue the symptoms of sinusitis and pursue treatments that have unnecessary side effects, according to Dr. Allan Levin, an ear, nose, and throat doctor (otolaryngologist), who specializes in nose and sinus conditions.

"A lot of times [patients] themselves delay their own diagnosis because they assume—they wrongly assume—they have a cold," said Dr. Levin, who has been treating sinusitis for New Yorkers for more than two decades.

Another hindrance to seeking proper treatment, he said, is that general practitioners don't have fiber-optic nasal endoscopes, the tool specialists use to diagnose sinusitis, and thus general doctors can have difficulty distinguishing sinusitis from other conditions.

As a result, many cases go untreated. Sinusitis afflicts 31 million Americans, who pay \$1 billion annually for over-the-counter medications to treat it, and \$150 billion on prescription medications, according to the American College of

Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

Treatments

The key to sinus health is the movement of mucus out of the sinus cavities. You have eight sinus cavities that connect to your nose via small openings called ostia. The sinuses produce and are lined with mucus that is moved along by microscopic hair-like organelles called cilia. The cilia live on the surface of the mucus membrane and wave back and forth about 1,000 times per minute to keep mucus moving so it doesn't stagnate or block the ostia.

When you have sinusitis, the tissues lining the sinuses and nose swell and produce much more mucus than usual. This derails the cilia, and the ostia become clogged.

Endoscopic Surgery

The most severe cases of chronic sinusitis require endoscopic sinus surgery in which surgical instruments are used to clean the sinuses.

See Sinusitis on B2

How Balloon Sinus Dilation Works



Blocked Sinus Pathway



Balloon Inflated



Drainage Restored

How to Recognize Sinusitis

Sinusitis has three phases and the longer it progresses, the greater the chances that surgery will be needed to correct it, so identifying it early is important.

1. Acute Sinusitis

Acute sinusitis is the first phase that develops after a cold or allergic reaction. If your cold symptoms don't go away after 10 days and you experience pressure or pain in your face, and a stuffy nose, with thick excess mucus that is "yellow or green—especially green," then you should consult your doctor, Dr. Levin said.

2. Sub-Acute

The sub-acute phase lasts from four to eight weeks with symptoms that are the same but often less severe, than the acute ones. During this phase a patient may think, "Well, now I'm somewhat better ... not perfect yet," Dr. Levin said. "But what they don't realize is that chronic sinusitis, then somewhat insidiously, lingers." And without realizing it, they enter the chronic phase.

3. Chronic

When sinusitis lasts more than 12 weeks it is considered chronic.

Symptoms of chronic sinusitis include post-nasal drip, congestion, reduced sense of smell, pain or pressure in the face, headaches, ear pain, coughing, sore throat, bad breath, fatigue, dental pain, fever, and nausea.

At this stage the sinusitis will most likely require

some type of surgery. However, with advances in technology, Dr. Levin said, that most surgeries now are outpatient and people can usually return to work either the next day, or shortly afterward.

Note:

When people have several attacks of sinusitis in a year it is known as recurrent sinusitis.