

How the VA Rates Sinusitis and Rhinitis

Regulatory Source: 38 CFR § 4.97 – Diagnostic Codes 6510–6522

VA Source: <https://ecfr.gov>

Summary:

The VA rates sinusitis and rhinitis based on frequency of flare-ups, need for antibiotics, and structural damage (e.g., nasal polyps, surgery). Rhinitis without polyps is rated lower than sinusitis with chronic symptoms.

VA Rating Table:

Rating	Explanation
0%	Sinus or nasal symptoms present but do not require regular medical treatment or cause functional impairment.
10%	1 or 2 incapacitating episodes per year requiring antibiotics or more than 6 non-incapacitating episodes with symptoms like headaches, pain, and discharge.
30%	3 or more incapacitating episodes per year requiring prolonged antibiotic treatment, or frequent severe symptoms.
50%	Following radical surgery with chronic osteomyelitis, or near constant sinusitis with symptoms despite repeated treatments.

Required Evidence:

- Diagnosis of sinusitis or rhinitis from ENT or primary care
- Antibiotic treatment records showing frequency of infection
- Imaging: X-rays or CT scans showing sinus blockage or polyp growth
- ENT surgical reports if applicable (e.g., nasal polyps, turbinate reduction)
- Personal statement about severity and seasonal impact

Pro Tip:

Keep records of each antibiotic course, flare-up, and procedure. Sinus surgery with poor results or recurrence can justify a higher rating.