

Throat Infection - Viral

Definition

- A viral infection of the throat

Health Information

Symptoms

- Pain, discomfort or raw feeling of the throat
- Pain is made worse when swallows
- The infection of the throat usually also involves the tonsils.
- Children less than 2 years of age usually can't complain about a sore throat. A young child who does not want favorite foods may have a sore throat. They may also start to cry during feedings.

Cause

- Usually caused by an infection of the throat (pharyngitis). Since the tonsils are in that area, they are usually also infected (tonsillitis).
- **Colds (URIs).** Most sore throats are part of a cold. In fact, a sore throat may be the only symptom for the first 24 hours.
- **Influenza.** A sore throat can be the first symptom in flu infections.
- **Viral pharyngitis.** Some viruses cause a sore throat without any nasal symptoms.

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent spread of infection.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most sore throats are just part of a cold and caused by a virus.
- A cough, hoarse voice or nasal discharge points to a cold as the cause
- If a sore throat is the only symptom, it's still usually viral. A fever may also be present.
- Viral throat infections can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Sore Throat Pain Relief:

- Age over 1 year. Can sip warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice. Some children prefer cold foods such as popsicles or ice cream.
- Age over 6 years. Can also suck on hard candy or lollipops. Butterscotch seems to help.
- Age over 8 years. Can also gargle. Use warm water with a little table salt added. A liquid antacid can be added instead of salt. Use Mylanta or the store brand. No prescription is needed.
- Medicated throat sprays or lozenges are generally not helpful.

3. Pain Medicine:

- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

4. Fever:

- For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.

5. **Antibiotics Not Needed:**

- Antibiotics are not helpful for viral infections.
- They can only kill bacteria.

6. **Fluids and Soft Diet:**

- Try to get your child to drink adequate fluids.
- Goal: Keep your child well hydrated.
- Cold drinks, milk shakes, popsicles, slushes, and sherbet are good choices.
- **Solids.** Offer a soft diet. Also avoid foods that need much chewing. Avoid citrus, salty, or spicy foods. Note: Fluid intake is much more important than eating any solids.
- Swollen tonsils can make some solid foods hard to swallow. Cut food into smaller pieces.

7. **What to Expect:**

- Most often, sore throats with a viral illness last 4 or 5 days.
- Other cold symptoms may last longer.

8. **Return to School:**

- Your child can return to school after the fever is gone.
- Your child should feel well enough to join in normal activities.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or drooling occurs
- Sore throat with a cold lasts more than 5 days
- Fever lasts more than 3 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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