

Sore Throat (Tonsillitis)

A sore throat is painful and the throat is often red and swollen. It is either a sign of illness or the result of something in the environment that is irritating your throat. The most common cause is a viral infection. Other causes include bacterial infection, allergic reactions, irritation from smoking, alcohol use, or chemical fumes. Depending on the cause of your sore throat, you may also have a fever, swelling in your neck glands, a runny nose, a cough, itchy eyes, or voice hoarseness.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME

Instructions

- + Gargle with a mouthwash or warm salt water (1/2-1 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water) several times a day.
- + Suck on throat lozenges, hard candy, or drink cool fluids to help ease the irritation.
- + Use a cool mist humidifier (vaporizer) to increase air moisture. This will help relieve the tight, dry feeling in your throat. DO NOT use hot steam.
- + DO NOT smoke or drink alcoholic beverages while your throat is sore.
- + Try eating only soft foods or drinking liquids to give you comfort.
- + DO NOT share eating utensils while your throat is sore.
- + If your doctor states you are able to take ibuprofen, this medication is often effective

in treatment of throat pain. Take it regularly for pain. Even if you are prescribed antibiotics, they do not treat pain.

WHEN TO GET HELP

Go to the nearest Emergency Department if you are experiencing any of the following:

- + You develop increased throat pain, drooling, or difficulty breathing.
- + You cannot swallow water or saliva.

See your family doctor if you are experiencing any of the following:

- + You cough up brown mucous.
- + You have high fever or swollen glands in your neck.

TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your family doctor.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in ___ days.

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Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:

www.bcemn.ca/clinical_resource/sore-throat