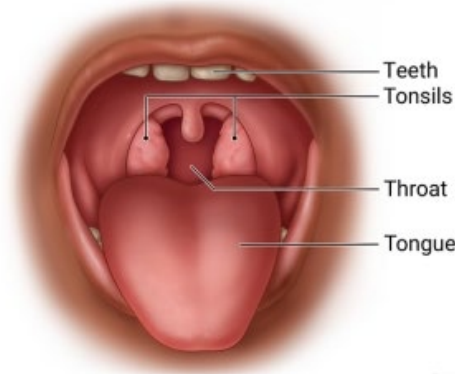


Sore Throat - Child

Key Points:

In general, sore throats can happen to children of any age, although most commonly occur in children under the age of three. Sore throats can be painful and annoying but fortunately, most sore throats go away on their own and do not require antibiotics to go away.



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What Causes a Sore Throat?

- Viral illnesses like a cold or flu
- Allergies
- Exposure to second hand smoke
- Children with post-nasal drip may get sore throats from clearing their throat or coughing at night
- Bacteria such as group A strep (Streptococcal pharyngitis)

Signs and Symptoms of a Sore Throat:

- Child may say their throat or neck is sore
- Child may say it hurts to swallow
- Child may have a hoarse voice

These instructions are not intended to be all-inclusive and may not cover all possibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your doctor, Health 811 at 1 (866) 797-0007, or return to the Emergency Department.



Sore Throat - Child

- Younger children may refuse to eat or drink, or may cry when feeding or swallowing
- Some children may have a cough and runny nose, nausea, or stomach pain
- The child's throat may be redder than normal

Diagnosis and Treatment

A doctor will determine what is most likely causing the child's sore throat by asking about symptoms and doing a physical exam. If necessary, the doctor may swab the child's throat.

If the doctor determines that the cause is a bacteria (e.g. Strep throat), antibiotics will be needed.

- It is important to take the medication as prescribed **until it is finished**, even if their symptoms go away.

If the doctor determines that a virus is likely the cause, antibiotics are not needed, and the sore throat will get better on its own with one week.

What can I do at for the child at home?

- For pain relief and/or fever you may give the child acetaminophen (Tylenol[®], Tempra) or ibuprofen (Advil[®], Motrin) **UNLESS YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD NOT TO** (for example, if they have stomach ulcers, or asthma and these medications aggravate their symptoms). Read and follow all instructions on the label.
- **REMEMBER: Never give aspirin to children** because it can cause Reye's syndrome. Reye's syndrome is a very serious, but rare illness that can harm the liver and brain.
- Have the child drink plenty of fluids. Drinks such as warm milk (can include breast milk or formula), warm water or warm soup may ease throat pain. Cold foods like Popsicles and ice cream can soothe the throat as well.
- Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke around the child, smoke irritates the throat.
- Try using a humidifier in the child's room, moist air can sooth the throat.

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Sore Throat - Child

- Older children may try gargling with salt water several times a day. This can reduce swelling and pain (mix ½ teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water – **DO NOT SWALLOW**).

Return to Emergency Department or call 911 immediately if the child:

- Develops severe difficulty breathing (you may notice the indentations between the child's ribs or at the breastbone when they breath in).
- Has difficulty or severe pain when swallowing (you may notice excessive drooling)
- Experiences swelling of the mouth or tongue
- Develops bluish discolouration of the lips or tongue
- Becomes confused, unusually difficult to waken, or behaves abnormally

Bring your child to their primary care provider or return to Emergency Department if:

- If the child develops a new fever, or if they already had one, it is not going away
- If the child coughs up discoloured or bloody mucus
- If the child has a fever with a stiff neck or headache
- If the child cannot swallow or cannot drink enough fluids because of the throat pain
- If the child has worsening symptoms and they are unable to take their medication
- If the child develops any new symptoms, such as a rash, earache, vomiting, or nausea
- If the child is not getting better after 2-3 days



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