

Sore Throat

By Theresa Schornack, CPNP

Definition:

- The child complains of a sore throat.
- In children too young to talk, a sore throat may be suspected if they refuse to eat or begin to cry during the feeding.
- When examined with a light, the throat is bright red.

Causes

Infection with cold viruses, strep bacteria, or a fungus can cause a sore throat, as can allergies or irritation from smoke or chemical fumes.

Signs/Symptoms

Typical symptoms include pain, swelling, redness, and a tickle or lump in the throat, a cough, and swollen glands in the neck. You may have a fever or headache. People with a really bad sore throat may drool or have trouble swallowing and talking.

Care

If the doctor suspects a bacterial infection, you may receive antibiotics. To relieve symptoms, follow the instructions below.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

- Children over the age of 6 years old can gargle with mouthwash or warm salt water (1 teaspoon salt in 1 cup water) several times a day. DO NOT SWALLOW the mouthwash or salt water.
- Children over 4 years of age can suck on hard candy this may ease the pain.
- You also can take over-the-counter medications, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen for fever over 102.0 or a great deal of throat pain. Take all medicines exactly as directed.
- If your doctor has prescribed antibiotics, finish all the medication even if you feel well. If you don't, the infection may return.
- Use a cool-mist humidifier (vaporizer) to increase air moisture and help relieve the tight, dry feeling in your throat. Do not use hot steam.
- Do not drink acidic products like orange juice, apple juice, grape juice or cherry juice for a few days to prevent more irritation to the throat.
- You may be more comfortable only eating soft foods or cool drinking liquids.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse Practitioner If...

- Your throat pain gets worse or is not better in a few days.
- You develop a high fever.
- You get a rash anywhere on your skin or the inside your mouth.

Seek Care Immediately If...

- You have trouble breathing or swallowing.
- You have really bad throat pain or start to drool.