



PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN

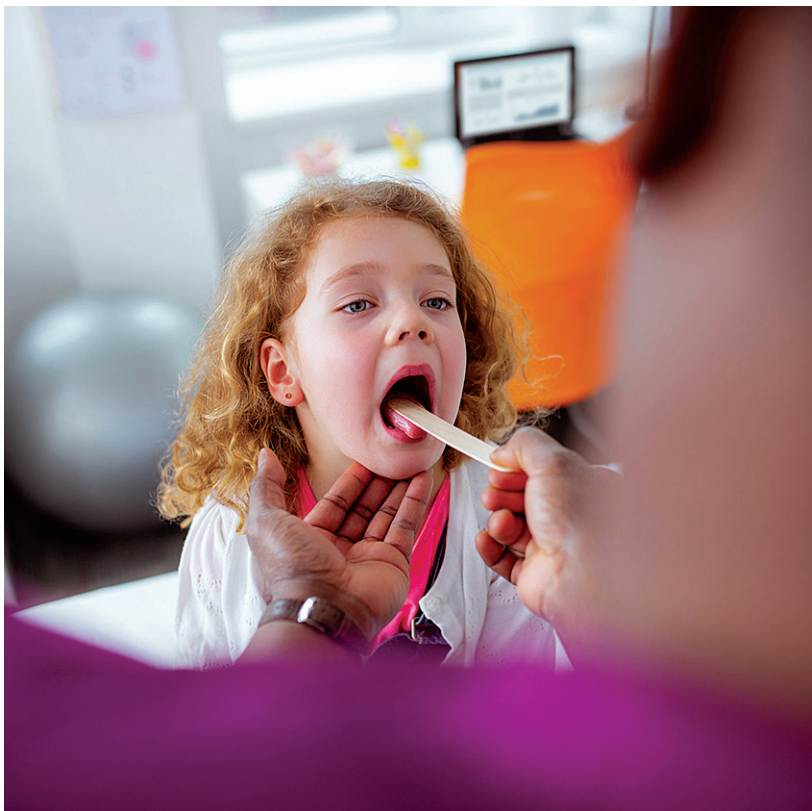


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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

STREP THROAT: ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW



Sore throats are a common childhood complaint, especially during the winter months. Most of the time, there is not much for parents to worry about, but occasionally a sore throat can be the first sign of a more serious condition known as strep throat. Strep throat is a common type of sore throat in children, but it is not very common in adults. Strep throat is very contagious but thankfully, with the proper medicine, antibiotics, rest, and fluids, your child should be feeling better in just a few days.

Symptoms

If your child's sore throat is accompanied by these symptoms that usually develop in about three days, you want to call the doctor because they might have strep throat:

- Sore throat, especially when swallowing

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Strep throat is very contagious, but with the proper medicine, rest, and fluids, your child should feel better in a few days.

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- Fever
- Bright red, swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Swollen, tender glands in the neck
- Poor appetite, headache, nausea or vomiting, especially in younger children
- Lower stomach pain
- A red rash on the body

Diagnosis

In order to diagnose strep throat, doctors can do a rapid strep test to collect a sample and see if a sore throat is strep throat. The sample is just two cotton-tipped swabs swiped over the back of the child's throat and tonsils. This should not hurt but may cause your child to gag. If the test comes back positive, antibiotics can be prescribed to help your child feel better faster and prevent spreading it to others. Take the prescription exactly as the doctor says to. Generally, most doctors or health-care providers will prescribe 10 days of antibiotics. Do not stop taking the medicine, even if you or your child feel better, unless the doctor says to stop.

Your child should stay home from school or day care until they have taken antibiotic medicine for 12 hours and have no fever.

Protect yourself and others

Be sure to tell the school nurse and your child's teacher that your child has strep throat. It is important for school personnel to know so they can tell other parents to watch for symptoms in their children.

The best way to keep from getting or spreading strep is to wash your hands often. Everyone should wash hands often with soap or hand sanitizer. Practicing good hygiene, can keep everyone safe:

- Remind everyone to wash his or her hands well and often.
- Cover all coughs or sneezing with a tissue. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands, if you don't have a tissue.



- Keep your child's eating utensils, dishes, and drinking glasses separate and wash them in hot, soapy water after each use.
- Make sure your child does not share food, drinks, napkins, handkerchiefs, or towels with other family members.
- Give your child a new toothbrush after the antibiotic treatment starts and they are no longer contagious.
- Keep your child away from others for 12 hours after the medicine is started and until they have no fever.

How can I help my child feel better?

Home care can help your child feel better while battling strep throat. Give plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration, such as water or ginger ale. Avoid acidic beverages like orange juice, grapefruit juice, or lemonade because they can irritate a sore throat. Warm liquids like soups, sweetened tea, or hot chocolate can be soothing.

Talk to your doctor if your child's symptoms are not improving.

SOURCES:

- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/strep-throat.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/groupastrep/diseases-public/strep-throat.html>

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