

2014

# Sore Throat

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If you have a sore throat, it is usually a symptom of an illness, such as a cold. Most sore throats are caused by viruses. **This means that a sore throat caused by a virus will not get any better by taking antibiotics.** The body will get rid of the virus in 7 to 10 days.

Bacteria can also cause sore throats. Strep throat is caused by streptococcus bacteria. A throat swab needs to be done to accurately diagnose strep throat. This type of bacterial infection needs to be treated with an antibiotic.

## The following may help:

- Take Tylenol® or ibuprofen as directed.
- **Never give aspirin to anyone under 20 years of age for a virus.**
- Rest, and using a humidifier may help.
- Drink plenty of fluids, such as water, juice, or Gatorade®.
- Stop smoking and avoid second-hand smoke.
- Try popsicles and frozen desserts.
- Gargle with salt (1/4 teaspoon) in 8 ounces of water.

## **How to avoid spreading your sore throat:**

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Throw away used tissue promptly
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitizer

## **Contact your doctor if you experience the following:**

- Cannot swallow liquids
- Trouble breathing or wheezing
- Vomiting
- Skin rash
- Severe headache
- Fainting
- Visible lump in your throat
- High fever of 39°C (102.2°F) or more
- No improvement after 3 days of rest

If you have any questions, please ask.

We are here to help you.

