

# STREP THROAT VS. SORE THROAT

Yes, it is that time of year when our throats get scratchy and sore. The following information will help you decide what to do when your child complains of their sore throat.

Strep throat is an infection of the tissues in the back of the throat (pharynx) and/or the tonsils. The tissues become irritated and inflamed, causing a sudden, severe sore throat that may also be referred to as acute pharyngitis.

Strep throat is caused by streptococcal (strep) bacteria. There are many strains of strep bacteria, some of which cause more serious illness than others. A strep throat infection is not as common as a sore throat caused by a virus.

Strep throat is more common during the colder months when people are inside together for longer periods of time and infections can be passed from person to person more easily.

Symptoms of strep throat:

- Sudden, severe sore throat
- Pain or difficulty swallowing
- Fever over 101 degrees F.
- Swollen tonsils and lymph nodes
- White or yellow spots on the back of a bright, red throat

Strep throat usually does not occur with cold like symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, or a runny or stuffy nose. In general, the more cold like symptoms you have, the less likely it is that your sore throat is a strep infection.

Reasons to send your child to a doctor:

- Severe sore throat and fever over 101 degrees and lasts longer than 1-2 days.
- Severe sore throat that occurs 2-5 days after you know you have been exposed to someone with strep.
- Sore throat that lasts longer than 2-3 days despite gargling, analgesics taken at home and does not seem like a cold.
- A red rash that feels like sandpaper appears.
- You have difficulty sleeping or swallowing because your throat is blocked by swollen tonsils.

Home remedies that help:

- Drink extra fluids and increase humidity (moisture in air) in your home to help keep your throat moist.
- Take nonprescription medications to relieve a painful sore throat and reduce fever.
- Get plenty of rest. Stay home the first day of antibiotic treatment. You are still contagious and might pass the infection to others.
- Avoid sneezing or coughing on others.
- Washing hands often.
- Throwing tissues away timely.
- Changing your toothbrush, so bacteria doesn't reinfect you.

