

Throat Infection - Strep

Definition

- A bacterial infection of the throat caused by Strep

Health Information

Symptoms

- Pain, discomfort or raw feeling of the throat
- Pain is made worse when swallows
- Children less than 2 years of age usually can't complain about a sore throat. A young child who does not want favorite foods may have a sore throat. They may also start to cry during feedings.
- Other symptoms include sore throat, fever, headache, stomach pain, nausea and vomiting.
- Cough, hoarseness, red eyes, and runny nose are not seen with Strep throat. These symptoms point more to a viral cause.
- Scarlet fever rash (fine, red, sandpaper-like rash) is highly suggestive of Strep throat.
- If you look at the throat with a light, it will be bright red. The tonsil will be red and swollen, often covered with pus.
- Peak age: 5 to 15 years old. Not common under 2 years old unless sibling has Strep.

Cause

- Group A Strep is the only common bacterial cause of a throat infection. (called Strep pharyngitis).
- It accounts for 20% of sore throats with fever.
- Any infection of the throat usually also involves the tonsils. (called Strep tonsillitis)

Diagnosis

- Diagnosis can be confirmed by a Strep test on a sample of throat secretions.
- There is no risk to wait until a Strep test can be done.
- If your child has cold symptoms too, a Strep test is not needed.

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent spread of infection.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Strep causes 20% of throat and tonsil infections in school age children.
- Viral infections cause the rest.
- Strep throat is easy to treat with an antibiotic.
- Complications are rare.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Antibiotic by Mouth:

- Strep infections need a prescription for an antibiotic.
- The antibiotic will kill the bacteria that are causing the Strep throat infection.
- Give the antibiotic as directed.
- Try not to forget any of the doses.
- Give the antibiotic until it is gone. Reason: To stop the Strep infection from flaring up again.

3. **Sore Throat Pain Relief:**

- Age over 1 year. Can sip warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice. Some children prefer cold foods such as popsicles or ice cream.
- Age over 6 years. Can also suck on hard candy or lollipops. Butterscotch seems to help.
- Age over 8 years. Can also gargle. Use warm water with a little table salt added. A liquid antacid can be added instead of salt. Use Mylanta or the store brand. No prescription is needed.
- Medicated throat sprays or lozenges are generally not helpful.

4. **Pain Medicine:**

- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

5. **Fever:**

- For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.

6. **Fluids and Soft Diet:**

- Try to get your child to drink adequate fluids.
- Goal: Keep your child well hydrated.
- Cold drinks, milk shakes, popsicles, slushes, and sherbet are good choices.
- **Solids.** Offer a soft diet. Also avoid foods that need much chewing. Avoid citrus, salty, or spicy foods. Note: Fluid intake is much more important than eating any solids.
- Swollen tonsils can make some solid foods hard to swallow. Cut food into smaller pieces.

7. **What to Expect:**

- Strep throat responds quickly to antibiotics.
- The fever is usually gone by 24 hours.
- The sore throat starts to feel better by 48 hours.

8. **Return to School:**

- Your child can return to school after the fever is gone.
- Your child should feel well enough to join in normal activities.
- Children with Strep throat need to be taking an antibiotic for at least 12 hours.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or drooling occurs
- Fever lasts more than 3 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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