

Strep Throat

Sore throats can be caused by bacteria (ie strep), virus', allergens, environmental irritants (such as cigarette smoke) and postnasal drip. The majority of sore throats are NOT caused by strep, they are caused by virus'.

How You Get Strep Throat

Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils caused by group A *Streptococcus* bacteria (called "group A strep"). Group A strep bacteria can live in a person's nose and throat. The bacteria are spread through contact with droplets from an infected person's sneeze or cough. Strep throat is most common in children ages 5-15 years.

Common Symptoms of Strep Throat

- Sore throat, usually starting quickly
- Severe pain when swallowing
- A fever (101° F or above)
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches
- Tiny red spots (petechiae) on the soft or hard palate—the area at the back of the roof of the mouth
- Headache
- Nausea and/or vomiting, abdominal pain
- Swollen and tender lymph nodes in the neck
- Body aches
- A rough rash that feels like sandpaper

A viral sore throat that does **not** require antibiotics can present with conjunctivitis (pink eye), runny nose, cough, diarrhea, and a hoarse voice.

A strep test (throat swab) is needed to tell if your child has strep throat; just looking at their throat is not enough to make a diagnosis.

If the strep culture is positive, a prescription for antibiotics will be necessary.

Once treatment begins, your child should start feeling better within a day or two. Children with strep throat should stay home from school or daycare until they have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

Antibiotics will be effective against strep if given even 1 week after the start of symptoms.