

Strep Throat

(Streptococcal Pharyngitis)

What is strep throat?

Strep throat is an infection of the throat and tonsils. It is most often seen in school-age children. It is spread from one person to another person. It is caused by a type of germ called a bacteria (Streptococci pyogenes). It is called strep for short.

What are the symptoms?

Your child may show signs of strep throat from one to three days after being with another person who has strep throat. Symptoms include:

- A very sore throat.
- Not wanting to swallow or drooling.
- A fever higher than 101° F (38.3°C).
- Swollen glands in the neck area.
- Feeling very tired and crabby.
- A headache, stomachache or vomiting.

How is it diagnosed?

- The Rapid Strep Test is often used. Two cotton-tipped swabs are used to gently touch the sides of your child's throat. Results may be ready in 10 to 15 minutes.
- If the Rapid Strep Test does not show that your child has strep throat, another test may be done. The results of the other test results may not be ready for 24 hours. Your doctor or nurse will tell you how to find out the results.

How is it treated?

- Have your child drink plenty of fluids. Fluids are easier to swallow while the throat is very sore. Do not worry if your child does not want solid foods. Your child will eat solid foods when the infection is better.
- An antibiotic medicine will be prescribed for your child. It is important for your child to take all of the medicine. If your child does not take all of the medicine, the infection may return. Even when your child feels well again, continue the medicine until it is gone.



Treatment (continued)

- Keep your child home from school until antibiotics have been taken for one full day and your child has no fever.
- To keep germs from spreading, it is important for family members to wash hands often. Do not share cups or eating utensils with other family members. If anyone in your family gets a fever, sore throat or swollen glands in the neck, call your doctor.
- Give your child a new toothbrush or put in the dishwasher to clean three days after starting the antibiotic.

How long does it last?

Most often it takes one to three days after starting the medicine for your child to feel well again. It may take up to three days for your child's fever to be less than 101F.

Special Information

There are two rare problems that can occur after strep throat: Rheumatic Fever and a kidney problem called Post-Streptococcal Glomerulonephritis.

- Symptoms of Rheumatic Fever include pain and swelling of the joints, fever and rash. Sometimes the valves of the heart may be damaged. These symptoms may be seen from 2 to 5 weeks after strep throat begins.
- Symptoms of Post-Streptococcal Glomerulonephritis include dark urine or blood in the urine, tiredness, and swelling of the hands, feet, and around the eyes. These symptoms may be seen around 10 days after strep throat begins.

What follow-up care is needed?

Your child's doctor or nurse will tell you if and when your child needs to be seen again.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Does not seem better after taking antibiotics for 72 hours.
- Has pain and swelling of the joints, fever and rash.
- Has less urine, bloody or dark urine, and mild swelling of the hands, feet or around the eyes.
- Is under 1 year old and has sunken eyes, no tears when crying and poor activity. These are signs of dehydration.
- Is over 1 year old and has sunken eyes, no tears when crying and poor activity. These are signs of dehydration.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.