

Strep Throat Infection

Your child has been diagnosed with strep throat and may have any of the following symptoms:

- Sore throat or pain, discomfort, or raw feeling of the throat
- Worsening sore throat when swallowing
- Fever, headache, stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting
- “Scarlet fever rash” - red, fine, sandpaper-like rash

Causes & Course of Strep Throat

- Strep throat is a bacterial throat infection caused by Group A Strep bacteria.
- The peak age for strep throat infections is in children aged 5-15 years old.
- Diagnosis of strep throat is confirmed by a strep test from a throat swab.
- Respiratory symptoms such as cough, congestion, and runny nose are not commonly seen with strep throat. If these symptoms are present, it is more likely that the sore throat is related to a viral process.
- Strep infections are treated with antibiotics, which should be given as directed for the full course as prescribed.
- Complications are rare and most children improve within 24-48 hours after starting treatment.

Care & Treatment of Strep Throat

- 1) Antibiotics:
 - Most commonly, children are prescribed amoxicillin. In the case of penicillin allergy, an alternative antibiotic is used.
 - Antibiotics should be taken for the full course as prescribed, even if symptoms have improved.
 - Be sure to follow pharmacy instructions for storage and handling of the antibiotic.
- 2) Pain & Fever Medication:
 - A weight-based dose of Tylenol or Motrin can be used as needed for discomfort. ([See Tylenol/Motrin Dosing Chart](#))
- 3) Sore Throat Relief:
 - Age >1 year: warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice, cold foods such as popsicles or ice cream.
 - Age >6 years: sucking on hard candy or lollipops can be helpful.
 - Age >8 years: gargle with warm water with a small amount of table salt.
 - Medicated throat sprays or lozenges are generally not helpful and are not recommended.
- 4) Increasing Fluids & Soft Diet:
 - Ensure that your child is drinking adequate fluids as the goal is to keep your child well-hydrated.
 - Cold drinks, milk shakes, popsicles, slushies and sherbet are all good choices.
 - Offer a soft diet. Good food options are mac and cheese, mashed potatoes, cereals with milk and ice cream. Avoiding foods that need a lot of chewing can help.
 - Citrus, salty, spicy foods and hot drinks and soda should be avoided.
 - Fluid intake and maintaining adequate hydration is always the most important goal. It is okay if your child eats less for a few days while they are recovering.

What to Expect with Strep Throat

- Usually responds quickly to antibiotics
- Fever should resolve within 24 hours
- Improvement in sore throat within 48 hours

Return to School/Daycare with Strep Throat

- Child has not had a fever (without fever-reducing medications) for 24 hours
- Child has had at least 24 hours or 2 doses of antibiotic

When to Call for Strep Throat

Continue Self-Care at Home

- Child has strep throat, is on antibiotics, and has no other issues or concerns

Call Office to be Seen Within 24 Hours

- Urine appears red, pink, or brown (tea or cola-colored)
- Severe sore throat pain after being on antibiotics for >24 hours
- Pain is not improving with pain medication
- Persistent fever after being on antibiotics for >48 hours
- Symptoms not improving after being on antibiotics for 3 days

Call Office to be Seen Urgently or Contact Emergency On-Call Provider

- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty swallowing fluids or saliva
- Stiff neck or can't move neck like normal
- Dehydration is suspected: no urine in >8 hours, dark urine, very dry mouth and no tears
- Child will not drink fluids or drinks very little for more than 8 hours
- Child cannot fully open their mouth
- Child is looking or acting very sick

Call 911 Now

- Child is not moving or can't wake up
- Severe trouble breathing (struggling for breath and cannot speak or cry)
- Child is faint or too weak to stand
- Purple or blood-colored spots or dots on skin with fever
- You think your child has a life threatening emergency