



Sore Throats

Throat infections (pharyngitis, tonsillitis) are painful and make all of us miserable at one time or another. Two types of germs cause throat infections - VIRUSES and BACTERIA. The most important bacteria infecting the throat is the streptococcus (strep throat).

The majorities of throat infections in children are caused by viruses and are not "strep". Unfortunately, the symptoms and severity of viral and strep throats are so similar that we often cannot accurately tell one from another by examination. It is important to treat strep throats with antibiotics because treatment prevents the occasional late complication - rheumatic fever with rheumatic heart disease.

We use throat cultures and a rapid strep test to identify strep throats. The results of the rapid strep test are usually available in 24-48 hours. If the culture proves positive, you will be contacted and antibiotics prescribed. A child with "strep" is considered contagious to others until he has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours. After that period your child may return to his usual activities if feels well. We recommend that other family members be seen by a doctor if they are symptomatic.

Remember:

1. A rapid strep or throat culture is a simple, quick way to identify those children with sore throats that need antibiotics.
 2. Children with "strep" should also be isolated from others from 24 hours after the start of therapy.
 3. Family contacts should be tested only if symptomatic.
 4. General treatment measures include: frequent liquids, gargles, sprays, lozenges. Tylenol and time.
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