

# Sore Throat

**S**ore throat is a common illness in children. Viruses or bacteria can cause sore throat. Viruses can directly cause inflammation and infection, or they can lead to nasal mucous production and post-nasal drainage which aggravate the throat, causing it to be sore. "Mouth breathing" resulting from congestion can also produce throat dryness and result in soreness. Some viruses can cause blisters in the mouth and throat. For viral sore throat, treatment includes: humidifier or vaporizer, during cold weather and periods of dry air, especially if the sore throat is caused by mouth breathing. Warm salt water gargles and throat sprays can also provide relief. Lozenges and hard candies should not be used for children under age 4. Tylenol® or ibuprofen (ibuprofen only in children over the age of six months) can also alleviate discomfort as well. Sore throat with viral illness usually lasts 4-5 days.

When bacteria cause a sore throat, it should be treated with antibiotics. The most common sore-throat causing bacteria is streptococcus, or strep. It is very important that strep throat be treated with antibiotics, because if not treated it can develop into rheumatic fever. Our office can do a simple swab test to determine if the sore throat is caused by strep bacteria and should be treated by antibiotics.

## **WHEN TO CALL:**

- If your child has been in contact with someone with strep throat, and has a sore throat
- If your child's sore throat is accompanied by fever, swollen glands (lymph nodes) in the neck, or white patches or coating on the back of her throat or tonsils
- If your child's sore throat is associated with trouble breathing or difficulty swallowing liquids
- If your child's sore throat lasts for more than one week
- If your child's fever lasts more than 3 days



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