

Winter Action Patient Information Leaflet

SORE THROAT



Sore throats and tonsillitis are usually caused by a virus and may be accompanied with a high temperature, pain on swallowing and hoarseness. Most cases will clear up without treatment within 7 days.

What causes sore throats?

Sore throats commonly occur with or following a cold and are seen more frequently during the winter months, particularly in children and young adults. Most cases are caused by a virus that makes the throat and tonsils sore, red and inflamed.

Will antibiotics help?

Antibiotics have no effect on viruses so taking them will usually not help a sore throat. Using an antibiotic when one is not required is not recommended as it can make them less effective against more serious infections.

How can I help my sore throat?

- Drink plenty of clear fluids (e.g. fruit squash). This will help to prevent dehydration and reduce a high temperature (fever).
- Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can relieve the pain and soreness but it is important not to exceed the dose on the packet. Liquid forms of these medicines are available for children.
- Some patients get relief from gargling with Soluble Aspirin or using special gargles and sprays available from the pharmacy. Your pharmacist will be able to advise you which products are suitable.

It is necessary to contact your doctor if:

- **You are having difficulty swallowing or breathing**
- **You also have a rash**
- **There are white spots on the tonsils**
- **There is swelling in the neck, armpit of groin area**
- **If the sore throat does not improve or gets worse after one week.**

For further information please log on to :

www.patient.co.uk or www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk