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Sore throat, a very common complaint, is usually the first symptom of a mild viral illness such as a cold or the flu and not a cause for concern.

WHAT IS A SORE THROAT?

Sore throat can be due to an inflammation of the throat (pharyngitis), typically causing redness and swelling. An inflamed throat often also involves nearby structures – the mouth, nose, ears, oesophagus, larynx (voice box), (laryngitis) tonsils (at the back of the pharynx) (tonsillitis) and adenoids (higher up in the nasal part of the pharynx).¹ It is important always to be aware, however, that sometimes a sore throat indicates a more serious condition, such as strep throat infection.^{1,2}

WHAT CAUSES A SORE THROAT?

There are various possible causes for sore throat, including:^{1,2,3,4}

- Viral infections. About 90 percent of throat infections are caused by a virus (like cold or flu), and typically clear up within a week.^{1,4}
- Bacterial infections. These are the next most common cause after viral infections. Usually, the bacterial infection is due to streptococcal bacteria, which cause a sore throat known as “strep throat”.^{1,4}
- Infectious mononucleosis, sometimes called “mono”, is another common viral infection that can cause a severe sore throat and inflammation of the tonsils.¹
- Laryngitis (inflammation of the larynx)²
- Tonsillitis (inflammation of the tonsils)²
- Fungal infection caused by the candida fungus, which is a type of yeast. Infection of the mouth or throat is known as oral candidiasis or oral thrush.⁴
- Smoking.¹
- Inhaling chemical fumes or air pollution, or swallowing

- substances that irritate or damage the lining of the throat.¹
- Chronic (long-term) pharyngitis can be due to a respiratory, sinus or oral infection that spreads to the throat.¹
- Having allergies or a persistent cough.¹
- Mouth breathing and dry, dusty air.¹
- Overusing your voice.¹

SYMPTOMS OF A SORE THROAT

- If you have a sore throat, your symptoms could further include:^{1,2}
- A raw, scratchy or burning sensation in the back of the throat, and pain, especially when swallowing.
- Inflammation – redness visible at the back of your mouth, and swelling.
- A dry throat
- Bad breath
- Mild cough
- Tender or swollen neck glands
- Sneezing and coughing
- Hoarseness
- Runny nose
- Mild fever
- General fatigue
- Painful breathing and speaking
- Pus in the throat
- Earache.

The symptoms are similar for children, but they may also have a raised temperature and appear less active than usual.²

MANAGING A SORE THROAT AT HOME

A sore throat can be effectively managed with self care at home. You can treat sore throat symptoms as follows:^{1,2,5}

- Rest¹
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. You can also suck ice cubes or ice lollies.^{1,2}
- Consider using over-the-counter medicated products tailored specifically for your sore throat symptoms, such as throat lozenges and oral sprays from the Andolex® range. At the first sign of a sore throat, Andolex® Lozenges can provide relief by soothing irritation and scratchiness while effectively combating the bacteria and viruses responsible for the discomfort. For a more severe, inflamed throat, Andolex®-C Lozenges offer triple-action relief. These lozenges reduce swelling, numb pain and act as an antiseptic, effectively eliminating bacteria, viruses and fungi. Additionally, Andolex® Oral Spray provides 4-in-1 relief after only 1 minute by addressing pain and inflammation and numbing sensations, while also targeting and eliminating harmful bacteria, viruses and fungi with its gold standard antiseptic. Whether your sore throat is caused by a virus or bacteria, the Andolex® range takes a holistic approach by not



only alleviating symptoms but also addressing the underlying cause. For personalised recommendations on which Andolex® product may best suit your needs, consult with your doctor or pharmacist.⁵

- Do not smoke and avoid smoky environments.^{1,2}
- Eat cool, soft foods to avoid irritating your throat.^{1,2}
- Gargle with warm salt water (children shouldn't try this).^{1,2}
- Try using a humidifier if your sore throat is caused or made worse by mouth breathing or dry air.¹

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

- See your GP without delay if you have a sore throat and:^{1,2}
- You rapidly develop a fever and a sore throat at the same time – these are classic symptoms of strep throat, a bacterial infection that should receive medical attention as soon as possible. Strep throat may develop serious complications if left untreated, including rheumatic fever, which can damage the heart. Other strep throat symptoms are a sore throat without other typical cold symptoms, swollen neck glands and white patches at the back of the throat.¹
- Have a very high temperature, are feeling hot and shivery or have flu-like symptoms that do not improve after a few days: this may indicate infectious mononucleosis fever. In children, the condition is usually mild, but after childhood mono can be serious, affecting the liver and spleen.^{1,2}
- It does not improve after a week. If the sore throat is accompanied by postnasal drip, it may indicate allergies. A sore throat that lasts for more than two weeks can be a symptom of a serious illness, such as throat cancer.
- Hoarseness persisting longer than two weeks may also be a sign of throat or oral cancer.¹
- You have a chronic medical condition or a weakened immune system because of chemotherapy.²

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF A SORE THROAT

Your doctor will examine your throat and ask about your symptoms. It may be tricky to determine the cause of a sore throat by examination alone, so your doctor may recommend tests if a cause such as strep throat or mono is suspected.¹

Checking for strep throat involves taking a sample of throat mucus with a swab (a painless procedure), which is then cultured and analysed. To test for mono, your doctor may take a blood sample to check for abnormal white blood cells or antibodies.¹

You may also be examined for symptoms of other conditions, such as sinus or ear infections.¹

If your doctor determines that your sore throat is fairly mild and not a cause for concern, treatment is usually aimed at easing symptoms and resting at home. (See above: "Managing a sore throat at home").¹

More serious bacterial infections such as strep throat can

be effectively treated with antibiotics. Antibiotics may not always shorten the course of the disease, but they destroy the bacteria and reduce the risk of serious strep complications. Note that antibiotics will not help with viral infections.¹

For chronic pharyngitis, your doctor will treat the primary source of the infection.¹

If your sore throat is so severe that it makes breathing or eating difficult, your doctor may prescribe a steroid medication.¹

CALL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD IS:

- Experiencing severe symptoms that are rapidly getting worse²
- Breathing with a high-pitched sound (stridor)²
- Having difficulty breathing or swallowing liquids, or drooling – this can be a sign of not being able to swallow. These symptoms may be caused by one of two rare conditions: an inflamed epiglottis (the little flap visible at the back of the throat), or a throat abscess.^{1,6}



MEDICAL REFERENCES

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