

IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION ABOUT

SORE THROATS

This brochure is to help you make the best choice for you or your child. It gives you up to date information about sore throats.



Toward
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Administered by the Alberta
Medical Association

What causes sore throats (Also known as Pharyngitis)?

- Most sore throats are caused by viruses and do not require antibiotics.
- The most common bacteria that causes sore throats is called “Group A Strep”. Sore throat caused by this bug is often called “Strep Throat”.

When should I see my doctor?

- If you have a sore throat with runny nose or cough then you probably just have a cold. If you have sore throat for 2 or more days without runny nose or cough then you may have Strep Throat and you should see your doctor.

Do I need antibiotics?

- Most sore throats get better on their own.
- You only need antibiotics if you have Strep Throat.
- A throat swab must be taken to diagnose Strep Throat: (Doctors cannot diagnose Strep Throat by just looking at it).
 - Your throat swab results will be available within 48 to 72 hours.
 - While waiting for the results of your throat swab, make sure that you get plenty of fluids and try to increase the humidity in your home.
 - Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol® or Tempra®) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil® or Motrin®) is usually all that is needed to help with the pain and fever.
- Once your doctor has the results of the throat swab, he/she will let you know how to treat it.



Warning!

If your child is unable to swallow or is drooling, take your child to the doctor.

Does my whole family need to be tested if they have been in contact with someone with Strep Throat?

- ◆ No! You or your children only need to be tested if a sore throat and fever develops.

How quickly can I return to normal activities?

- ◆ You can safely return to normal activities once you are feeling well enough.

Why aren't antibiotics used for viral infections?

- ◆ Antibiotics do not kill viruses.
- ◆ Antibiotics encourage the growth of more resistant bacteria (superbugs) and may make it more difficult to treat other infections later.



Warning!

- ◆ Antibiotics can cause side effects such as stomach upset or rash.
- ◆ Antibiotics should only be used by the person for whom they were prescribed. Do **NOT** share.

Tips

- ◆ Wash hands before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing the nose.
- ◆ Wash children's toys frequently to stop the spread of germs.
- ◆ Take your child's temperature with a thermometer, if they are complaining of a sore throat.
- ◆ Take antibiotics only as prescribed by your doctor.

Where can I get more information?

- ◆ See your doctor.
- ◆ After reading this brochure, there may be other questions that you wish to ask. It may be helpful to write down any questions you have or points that you would like to discuss with your doctor.

This information guide was prepared by the Antibiotics Working Group of the TOP Program to assist you with decisions about the treatment of sore throats.

The Antibiotics Working Group is a team made up of family physicians, infectious diseases specialists, paediatricians, microbiologists, community and hospital pharmacists, an epidemiologist, consumers, Alberta Blue Cross and Alberta Health & Wellness representative.

A version of this pamphlet is available on the TOP web site: www.topalbertadoctors.org