

JULY

Appropriate treatment for children with pharyngitis

Sore throat –

The dry scratchiness and painful swallowing that are the hallmarks of a sore throat can make your child miserable. A sore throat – known medically as pharyngitis – is most often caused by a viral infection such as a cold or the flu (influenza). In many cases, a sore throat is the first sign that your child is getting sick.



Home Treatment

Most sore throats go away without treatment, often within a week or so. That's a good thing, because no medical therapy exists for sore throats caused by viral infections. But increasing your child's fluid intake and getting extra sleep can help speed their recovery.

When your child is sick, offer fluids such as water, soups, Jell-O and broths. If your child finds it extremely painful to swallow, have them sip warm broth through a straw or suck on ice chips. Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen as directed by your doctor for fever.

Until your child's sore throat has run its course, you can also try these tips:

- **Increase their fluid intake.** Fluids such as water, juice, tea and warm soup help replace fluids lost during mucus production or fever. Avoid giving your child caffeine, which can cause dehydration.
- **Gargle with warm salt water.** Mix ½ teaspoon of salt in a full glass of warm water, have your child gargle, and then spit the water out. This will soothe their throat and clear it of mucus.
- **Use honey and lemon** (not for children 1 year of age and younger). Stir honey and lemon to taste into a glass of very hot water, allowing it to cool to room temperature before you or your children sip it. The honey coats and soothes your throat, and the lemon helps cut mucus. This time-tested recipe may relieve most of your pain — if only temporarily.
- **Humidify the air.** Adding moisture to the air prevents your child's mucous membranes from drying out. This can reduce irritation and make it easier to sleep. Be sure to change the water in a room humidifier daily and clean the unit at least once every three days to help prevent the growth of harmful molds and bacteria.
- **Avoid smoke and other air pollutants.** Smoke irritates a sore throat. Do not expose your children to secondhand smoke and avoid all fumes from household cleaners and paint.

When to see a doctor

See your doctor if your child has any of the following:

- A sore throat that is severe or lasts longer than a week
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing
- A fever over 101 F (38.3 C) in babies under age 6 months or a fever over 103 F (39.4C) in older children.
- Tender or swollen lymph nodes in the neck
- Pus or white patches at the back of the throat
- Skin rashes, which can be a sign of an underlying condition such as measles, meningitis or mono (infectious mononucleosis)
- Hoarseness or a cough that lasts longer than two weeks
- Blood in the saliva or phlegm
- Signs or symptoms of dehydration, such as sunken eyes, severe weakness and decreased urine output
- Contact with someone who has been diagnosed with strep throat
- Sore throats that get better but keep coming back
- Excessive drooling (in a young child)