

# Treatment for sore throat

Sore throats are very common. They can be caused by either bacteria or viruses. Most sore throats are not serious and will go after 3-7 days without medical treatment.

## What are the symptoms?

There are a number of symptoms which include;

- Painful feeling at back of throat
- Tenderness in glands in neck
- Discomfort on swallowing
- High temperature
- Aching
- Headache
- Tiredness

## When should I come and see the doctor?

You will need to come and see the doctor if your symptoms have not improved after two weeks. If your immunity is lowered you will also need to see the doctor.

## When should I seek urgent medical advice?

You will need to get urgent medical advice if;

- You have a persistent fever (temperature above 38C)
- Have difficulty breathing
- Have difficulty swallowing saliva or fluids

## What causes a sore throat?

A sore throat can be a symptom of the common cold, flu or glandular fever.

You can also get infection and inflammation at the back of your throat or in your tonsils.

Sometimes bacteria can cause an infection of the throat – a “strep throat”.

## Do I need antibiotics?

The use of antibiotics is not recommended for sore throats because;

- Most sore throats are caused by viruses
- Even if a sore throat is caused by bacteria you will not get better any quicker and may experience side effects.
- Over-using antibiotics to treat minor ailments makes them less effective for life-threatening conditions

## What treatment should I take?

Sore throats are not usually serious and will pass in a week. Paracetamol or ibuprofen will help to ease the pain and reduce any fever. Adults may find that sucking lozenges can provide additional relief. Also, it is important to keep drinking plenty of fluids.

**We thank the doctors at Bishops Castle Medical Practice who created the original version of this leaflet**