

Sore Throat

Symptoms of sore throat may include:

- ▶ Red sore throat with pain on swallowing.
- ▶ White pus spots on tonsils.
- ▶ Hoarse voice and mild cough.
- ▶ Fever, headache, feeling tired, feeling sick.
- ▶ Swollen neck glands.

Most sore throats get better within seven days. It typically gets worse over 2-3 days and then gradually gets better within one week. In about 1 in 10 cases the soreness lasts longer than a week.

Do I need an antibiotic?

Most sore throats are caused by a viral infection.

Antibiotics **DO NOT** kill viruses.

So you **DO NOT** need an antibiotic for most sore throats.

In people who are normally well, your own immune system will usually clear the infection.

Antibiotics may cause side-effects such as thrush, diarrhoea, rash and stomach upsets, so they should not be taken unnecessarily. Unnecessary use of some antibiotics has caused them to become less effective.

Treatment for Sore Throat

Treatment options to relieve symptoms whilst waiting for your immune system to clear the infection.

No treatment	Many sore throats are mild and will usually get better soon without any treatment.
Pain & fever relief	Take paracetamol or ibuprofen regularly. Do not take any more than the recommended dose.
Mouthwash	Use simple mouthwashes (e.g. warm salty water) at frequent intervals until the discomfort and swelling subside.
Fluids	Drink plenty of fluids such as water and fruit-juices to avoid dehydration. Avoid food and drink that may irritate a sore throat (e.g. avoid hot drinks).
Over-the-counter medicines	Ask your community pharmacist for advice.

What if symptoms change?

Contact a doctor if you do not improve or you get worse. Also contact your doctor urgently if you develop any difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing adequate fluids or you become very unwell.