



My Throat Hurts!

Your clinician will assess all your symptoms to determine the cause and provide a treatment plan. Based on your symptoms, they may suspect Strep Throat, a common condition that is caused by a bacteria also known as group a Streptococcus.

Strep throat cannot be diagnosed by looking in the throat – a lab test must be done.

Why do a Strep Test?

The best way to accurately diagnose strep throat is by doing a Rapid Strep Test. A long swab, looking much like a Q-Tip®, is wiped on the back of the throat and any other red places in that area to grab any bacteria. The swab is then sent to a laboratory for a rapid strep test.

Negative Test Result: You do not have strep throat and antibiotics will not help. Taking an antibiotic when you do not have a bacterial infection to treat can have negative health consequences. The laboratory will continue watching the test to see if strep bacteria happen to grow over the next few days. If it turns positive over time, your clinician will contact you with the updated result and plan.

Positive Test Result: You have a bacteria called group A Streptococcus (group A strep), also known as strep throat. Your clinician will take into consideration your past and current medical history, physical exam, and lab test results to determine the appropriate course of treatment. This may include an antibiotic.

Strep throat is very contagious. Be sure to wash your hands often, cover your mouth when coughing, avoid sharing eating or drinking utensils, and avoid close physical contact. The person diagnosed should stay home from work or school for 24 hours after starting the antibiotic.

Symptoms of Bacterial Strep Throat

- Headache
- Stomachache
- Nausea
- Vomiting, especially with children
- Fatigue
- Rash
- Fever
- Sore throat that can start very quickly
- Pain when swallowing
- Swelling or tenderness of the glands on your neck
- Tonsils that are swollen and red
- Sometimes, patches of white on your tonsils or tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth

Be sure to:

- Tell your clinician if you have been prescribed antibiotics recently for any other reason
- Prior to your visit avoid antiseptic mouthwash

How do you feel better?

- Gargle with saltwater (for older children and adults only). Mix 1/4 teaspoon salt in 1 cup (8 oz) of warm water
- Suck on hard candy or ice chips
- Avoid spicy or acidic foods, such as orange juice
- Drink warm liquids like soups, sweetened tea, or hot chocolate to soothe the throat
- Eat easy-to-swallow foods, such as soup, applesauce, cooked cereal, mashed potatoes or yogurt
- If you are prescribed antibiotics, take the entire prescription as directed to clear the infection
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen as directed for fever and throat discomfort
- Cold foods, such as frozen yogurt, ice chips or fruit Popsicles may help soothe the throat
- Other directions provided to you by your clinician at the time of your appointment

References:

1. KidsHealth: Strep Throat, Sore Throat, Strep Test, <https://kidshealth.org/>, 7/30/21.
2. Krames OnDemand "Strep Screen (Rapid)", 7/30/21.
3. Krames OnDemand, "Strep Throat", 7/30/21.
4. Krames OnDemand, "Self-Care for Sore Throats", 7/30/21.