



Why do a strep test?

A strep test is uncomfortable for a few seconds, but it is the best way to accurately diagnose strep throat. 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. This is then put on a special plate called a culture and is given to the laboratory for a “rapid strep test.” There may be gagging or discomfort, but it only lasts a few seconds.

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

If the strep test result is...

Negative: it is not strep throat and therefore antibiotics will not help

- If it does come back negative, a normal strep test will be run over time and the clinic will contact you if it turns positive.

Positive: it is strep throat, an antibiotic will be used to kill the bacteria (group A streptococci) that is causing the irritation in the throat and probably the tonsils

- Antibiotics are used to stop the growth of or to destroy bacteria and other microorganisms, used chiefly in the treatment of infectious diseases.
- Strep throat is very contagious. You or your child should stay home from work or school for 24 hours after starting the antibiotic.

Symptoms of strep throat:

- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Listlessness
- Difficulty swallowing
- Loss of appetite
- Rash
- Does not include sneezing, coughing, or a runny or stuffy nose

Be sure to:

- Tell the doctor if you or your child has taken antibiotics recently
- Avoid antiseptic mouthwash before the test

How do you feel better?

- Get plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration, especially if there is a fever
- Avoid orange or grapefruit juice, lemonade, or other acidic beverages which can irritate the sore throat
- Get warm liquids like soups, sweetened tea, or hot chocolate to soothe the throat
- If you do receive antibiotics, take them as directed, for the length of time directed by the doctor

References:

1. KidsHealth: Strep Throat, Sore Throat, Strep Test, kidshealth.org, 9/26/17.
2. Dictionary.com: Antibiotic, dictionary.com, 9/26/17.
3. Get Smart, cdc.gov/getsmart, 9/26/17.