

## SORE THROAT



The throat is lined with a warm mucous membrane which invading viruses and occasionally bacteria find a comfortable place to flourish. This causes irritation and inflammation and makes the throat feel sore and scratchy. Your tonsils may become red and enlarged and

you may have white spots on them. Your lymph nodes, like your tonsils, may be swollen as your immune system works to filter out the invading organism. Within several days, a sore throat will usually subside as the body gains control over the infection.

### Treatment:

- **Gargle** Gargling with warm salt water may help break down secretions, remove white spots and soothe the throat. Stir 1/4 teaspoon of salt into a glass of warm water and gargle several times each day.
- **Throat Lozenges** Hard candies, cough drops, and lozenges may soothe a dry throat. Anesthetic lozenges numb throat tissues and may offer some relief from pain.
- **Anesthetic Sprays** Anesthetic sprays or gargle (e.g., Chloraseptic) may be used to numb throat tissues to make swallowing less painful.
- **Medications** Tylenol, Aspirin, or Advil may relieve throat pain.
- **Fluids** Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid (water, juice, soup) daily to add moisture to your irritated throat. Warm steam from a vaporizer or cool mist from a humidifier helps soothe an irritated throat.



### What if it is Strep?

Strep throat is a bacterial infection.

Most sore throats are caused by common cold viruses but sometimes bacteria called Group A streptococci (strep for short) can be the reason. Other types of strep (like group C) can cause sore throats, but Group A strep is of greater concern because it can lead to complications such as inflammation of the joints, heart, or kidneys. These complications are rare but potentially serious and can be prevented with antibiotic treatment. Sore throats caused by viruses do not respond to antibiotics. You are at greater risk if you have been exposed or have previously had strep.

### Treatment for Strep:

Sore throats from any type of strep will go away on their own, but antibiotics are encouraged to treat Group A strep to prevent possible complications. Antibiotics are often given for 10 days. Your sore throat will improve before that time but you must finish all your antibiotics even after you feel better. For groups of strep that do not have serious complications, antibiotics are not absolutely necessary but might be given to speed up recovery if needed. Ask your health care provider about this.

For more information on treatment of sore throats, or if your symptoms have not improved please call Student Health Services for treatment.

### Contact:

Advice Nurse: 486-3427

Appointment Desk: 486-2719

(appointments available Mon-Fri 8:30am—4:00pm)