Sore Throat or Strep?

ALWAYS GET A STREP TEST BEFORE TAKING AN ANTIBIOTIC
What is Strep?

Strep or strep throat is also known as Streptococcal Pharyngitis.

Pharyngitis is a type of sore throat and is a common illness in children. Pharyngitis can be caused by bacteria or by a virus. Strep throat is a bacterial form of pharyngitis. Your child’s health care provider can perform a strep test or throat culture to confirm if your child has strep throat.

Only children with diagnosed strep throat results should be treated with antibiotics. Ask your child’s doctor to perform a strep test the next time your child has Pharyngitis (or a sore throat).

When do I or my child need to get tested?

It is important that you see a doctor if you or your child has:

- A fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- White patches or streaks of pus on the tonsils.
- Dark red spots on the roof of the mouth.
- Bright red throat.
- Swollen tonsils.
- History of other chronic or serious health conditions.

If a baby less than three months old has a fever, call a provider right away.
When are antibiotics appropriate?

If your doctor prescribes you antibiotic medications, ask questions such as:

- What is the illness?
- Is the illness caused by bacteria?
- How long should I take this medication and how often?

Follow your doctor’s directions.

If your doctor has determined you have an infection caused by bacteria and prescribed you antibiotics, it is important that you follow their dosage instructions.

Take or give the right amount of medicine, at the right times.

Take or give the medicines for as long as you are told to, even if you or your child feels better.

Why should you say no to antibiotics?

Antibiotic medications don’t help upper respiratory infections such as colds or flu, most coughs, runny noses and sore throats not caused by strep.

You don’t need antibiotics for:

- Most sinus and ear infections and bronchitis, but you should always consult with your doctor before requesting any antibiotics.
- Illnesses and symptoms caused by viruses. Antibiotics are useless against them. Antibiotic use is only effective for illnesses causes by bacteria.
What’s the Harm?  
Is it harmful to take antibiotics?

Taking antibiotics whenever you get sick can lead to you developing an antibiotic resistance. If you take antibiotics when you don’t need them, they may not work when you need them most. As a result, it may take you longer to get well, lead to diseases spreading faster, and cause harm to more people.

- Don’t ask your health care provider to give you antibiotics for the cold or flu.
- Never take anyone else’s antibiotics or give someone else’s to your children.
What Medications Are Right for Me?

**Adults Should** take over-the-counter medications for fevers and aches.

**Children Should** get only over-the-counter medicines that are approved by their health care providers. Parents, you should:
- Be prepared. Ask for medicine suggestions before your children get sick.
- Ask your doctor before giving aspirin to children or teens. They could become seriously ill.
- Give the right dose of medicines. Follow instructions for weight and/or age.

Don’t jump to conclusions. Ask your health care provider for their recommendation in treating your child’s illness.

**To treat a cold or flu in adults and children you need to:**
- Drink fluids and get plenty of rest.
- Use a clean, cool mist humidifier.
- Avoid smoking, second-hand smoke and pollution.
- Try to be patient. Most colds and flu run their course in about eight to nine days.

**How can I be sure that my child doesn’t need antibiotics?**

Trust your health care provider to do what’s in the best interest of your child to help get them well.

Ask your child’s doctor to perform a strep test or throat culture to confirm if your child has strep throat. Only children with diagnosed strep throat results should be treated with antibiotics. Remember to always ask that your child have a strep test if he or she has pharyngitis or a sore throat.
Children with Pharyngitis Brochure

This information is not intended as a replacement for medical advice. Please speak with your doctor before making changes to your current lifestyle.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-800-565-9140 (TTY: 1-800-848-0298).

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注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致电 1-800-565-9140 (TTY:1-800-848-0298)。

QPC-27 CH (1/17)
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