

# Health Tips for Parents

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## Is your child suffering from strep throat?

A sore throat is a common complaint in children of all ages and is associated with a variety of ailments, from the common cold to seasonal allergies.

Sometimes, however, a sore throat can indicate strep throat.



Strep throat is caused by a type of bacteria called group A streptococcus and accounts for 15-30 percent of all sore throats in children and is seen less frequently in adults, says Jennifer Frances Logan, MD, UCLA family medicine physician in Redondo Beach.



**Diagnosis of strep throat** is generally based on course and symptoms. Your doctor may decide to do a throat swab to confirm the diagnosis, although this is not always necessary. Depending on symptoms, your doctor may also choose to do a nasal swab to test for influenza, and/or a blood test for mononucleosis.

**Treatment is generally a 10-day course of antibiotics** Unlike viruses, a bacterial infection such as

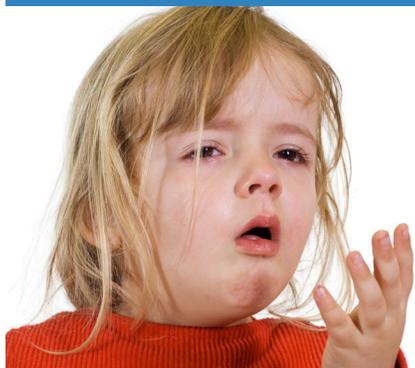
strep throat can be treated with antibiotics, which reduce the severity of the symptoms, shorten the duration of the illness, and prevent potentially serious complications.

After 24 hours of antibiotic therapy, your child is no longer contagious. If your child has repeated strep infections (three to four a year) despite appropriate treatment, he or she may benefit from a tonsillectomy, which is a surgery that removes tonsils, the site of strep infection in the throat. Symptoms of strep throat in children under 3 years differ, so sore throats should always be evaluated by a doctor.

Although there is not an inoculation for strep throat, to avoid more serious infections, always make sure your child's immunizations are up to date.

### Symptoms of strep throat

- Sudden onset of a very painful sore throat
- Fever over 101°F
- Headache
- Joint pain
- Absence of cough or congestion
- Pain when swallowing
- Swollen tonsils and lymph nodes
- White or yellow spots on the back of a bright-red throat



## Consult your physician

Strep throat is highly contagious. With appropriate treatment, most children's symptoms completely resolve within one week. If your child displays any lingering or new symptoms, a doctor visit is recommended.

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