Tonsillitis

Tonsillitis can be caused by viruses and bacteria. If your tonsillitis is due to strep bacteria, you will need a long-acting antibiotic shot or an oral antibiotic for 10 days of treatment. A throat swab or culture test is needed to confirm Strep is present. If you are positive for strep, then any close family members or friends need to be checked if they are ill because strep is very contagious. Mononucleosis is a virus infection that also causes tonsillitis; a blood test can be run to check for this.

To treat tonsillitis you should increase your oral liquids, stop smoking and eat a soft diet to reduce the pain of swallowing. Mild pain medicine and gargling with warm salt water (1 tsp. salt in 8 oz. water) can be very helpful especially if you have post-nasal drainage. Symptoms may also be relieved by using a throat spray or lozenges, or by sucking on hard candy. Cortisone medicine may be prescribed in addition to antibiotics to reduce swelling and pain.

Call your doctor or the emergency room right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- **Breathing difficulty or increased swelling in the throat.**
- **Pain so severe you are unable to swallow fluids or your own saliva.**
- **Severe headache, confusion, vomiting, or rash.**
- **A sore throat that lasts longer than one week.**
- **You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.**
- **Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.**
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

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