Herpangina

This virus can be spread by saliva and mouth-to-mouth contact. It can also be spread through contact with an infected person's stools. It usually takes 3-6 days after exposure to show signs of infection. More cases of herpangina occur in the summer. Usually a person with herpangina has a fever and a very sore throat. The person may also have a sore mouth. Often, the person has a red throat. The back of the throat is covered with small blisters (like canker sores). In more severe infections, there are more sores in the mouth, inside the lips, on the inside of the cheeks, and in the throat. It is also common to see blisters around the outside of the mouth. In the full-blown infection, a person can have painful blisters on the palms of the hand and the soles of the feet. Other *symptoms* (problems) include fever over 101° F (38.3° C), irritability, poor appetite because of the sore mouth, and dehydration because of inadequate fluid intake.

DIAGNOSIS

This *diagnosis* (learning what is wrong) is made by exam. Laboratory tests are usually not required.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- These sores typically hurt and are painful when exposed to salty, spicy, or acidic food or drinks such as orange juice or lemonade. Milk seems to be soothing for some children. Some children with herpangina will be able to drink without discomfort.
- In babies and young children weigh them daily. Record them to monitor for dehydration. **A rapid weight loss indicates there is not enough fluid intake.** You should consult your caregiver immediately.
- This is a viral illness. Antibiotics will not work.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Over the counter medicine such as Oragel® may also be used for pain relief. They should be used as directed. Side effects are possible.
- It is difficult to prevent exposure to the virus. Children are often contagious before symptoms start. If you do know of children with this infection, you may keep your child well by avoiding those children.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is not adequate pain relief.
- There is not enough fluid or food intake to maintain weight. This is especially important in babies and young children. **If the weight begins dropping it is important to consult with or see your caregiver immediately.** If your caregiver is not available, seek medical attention.

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