Pharyngitis (Viral and Bacterial)

Pharyngitis is soreness (*inflammation*) or infection of the pharynx. It is also called a sore throat.

CAUSES

Most sore throats are caused by viruses and are part of a cold. However, some sore throats are caused by strep and other bacteria. Sore throats can also be caused by post nasal drip from draining sinuses, allergies and sometimes from sleeping with an open mouth. Infectious sore throats can be spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing and sharing cups or eating utensils.

TREATMENT

Sore throats that are *viral* usually last 3-4 days. Viral illness will get better without medications (*antibiotics*). Strep throat and other *bacterial* infections will usually begin to get better about 24-48 hours after you begin to take antibiotics.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If the caregiver feels there is a bacterial infection or if there is a positive strep test, they will prescribe an antibiotic. **The full course of antibiotics must be taken!!** If the full course of antibiotic is not taken, you or your child may become ill again. If you or your child have strep throat and do not finish all of the medication, serious heart or kidney diseases may develop.
- Drink enough water and fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Get lots of rest.
- Gargle with salt water (½ tsp. of salt in a glass of water) as often as every 1-2 hours as you need for comfort.
- Hard candies may soothe the throat if individual is not at risk for choking. Throat sprays or lozenges may also be used.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Large, tender lumps in the neck develop.
- A rash develops.
- Green, yellow-brown or bloody sputum is coughed up.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 100.5º F (38.1° C) or higher for more than 1 day.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- A stiff neck develops.
- You or your child are drooling or unable to swallow liquids.
- You or your child are vomiting, unable to keep medications or liquids down.
- You or your child has severe pain, unrelieved with recommended medications.
- You or your child are having difficulty breathing (not due to stuffy nose).
- You or your child are unable to fully open your mouth.
- You or your child develop redness, swelling, or severe pain anywhere on the neck.
- 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.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.

- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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