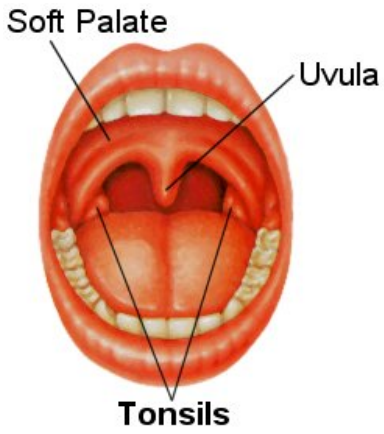
Strep Throat, Adult

Strep throat is an infection of the throat caused by a germ (*bacteria*). A bacteria is a type of tiny living thing that may cause disease. It is most common in late winter and early spring but can happen any time of the year. For patients who have not had their tonsils removed before, this germ can cause Strep tonsillitis. If someone has had the tonsils removed, they can still get Strep throat.



Strep throat is contagious and can spread through coughing or sneezing and other close contact with someone who has this problem.

SYMPTOMS

Common symptoms may include:

- Fever.
- Painful, red tonsils and/or throat.
- White or yellow spots on tonsils and/or throat.
- Swollen, tender lymph nodes or "glands" of the neck and/or under the jaw.
- Red rash all over the body (uncommon).

DIAGNOSIS

In most cases, a "rapid strep test" can help your caregiver make the diagnosis in a few minutes. If this test is not available, a light swab of infected area can be used for a throat culture to see if Strep bacteria are present. The results of a throat culture take about 2 days.

TREATMENT

Strep throat is generally treated with antibiotic medicine.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Gargle with 1 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water, 3 to 4 times per day or as necessary for comfort.
- Family members with a sore throat or fever should have a medical examination or throat culture. If there has been a positive throat culture in the family, your caregiver may treat the rest of the family without seeing them. This depends upon his knowledge of their condition and his familiarity with you and your family.
- You may return to work when you feel able.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort or fever as directed by your caregiver.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- You develop large glands in your neck.
- You develop a rash, cough or earache.
- You cough up green, yellow-brown or bloody sputum.
- You have pain or discomfort not controlled by medications or if problems seem to be getting worse rather than better.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop any new symptoms such as vomiting, severe headache, stiff or painful neck, chest pain, shortness of breath, trouble breathing or swallowing.
- You develop severe throat pain, drooling or changes in voice.
- You develop swelling of the neck, or the skin on the neck becomes red and tender.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

Document Released: 04/07/2004 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011

ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.