

Fact Sheet

Sore Throat



What is a sore throat?

Sore throats are a very common illness in infants and children. They tend to be more common during winter months. The older child will complain of a sore throat but the younger child or infant may refuse to eat or drink or cry during feeding. If you look at the throat it may appear bright red. Sometimes the child with a sore throat can also have a fever (see [Fever](#) fact sheet).

What causes a sore throat?

It is usually caused by infection with viruses and less often bacteria. In younger children (less than two years old), throat infections are usually viral in origin. Antibiotics do not help viral infections.

What to do?

Pain relief is important as reducing pain can encourage your child to eat and drink. Give pain relief as below: -

Paracetamol ("Panadol") OR Ibuprofen ("Nurofen") using the dose recommended on the bottle.

Your child may find swallowing difficult. Encouraging your child to drink fluids is very important. They may wish to drink a smaller amount of fluids each drink but more often than usual. Warm fluids and soft foods may be easier for your child to swallow.

Throat sprays or throat lozenges are not recommended.

When should you contact your local doctor?

- If the sore throat persists for longer than 48 hours (2 days),
- If your child is drinking poorly for longer than 24 hours (1 day)
- If your child is unwell or has other symptoms described below.

You need to call immediately if your child has:

- Drooling (dribbling).
- Great difficulty swallowing.
- Difficulty breathing.
- A new skin rash or bruising.
- Increased snoring when asleep, or stopping breathing when asleep.
- Enlarging tender lumps in the neck.
- Extreme tiredness or drowsiness.
- Possibly choked on a foreign object or swallowed a toxic substance.

Remember

- Give pain relief.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.
- Seek medical attention if the symptoms persist for more than 48 hours or your child develops other symptoms.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

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