

Sore Throat (Pharyngitis)

Sore throats can be caused by viruses, bacteria, allergies, smoking, breathing polluted air, coughing or drinking alcohol. A sore throat is typically a sign of tonsillitis which is swelling of the tonsils. Tonsillitis is usually caused by a bacteria, but viruses can also be involved. Another cause of sore throat is pharyngitis, which is inflammation of the hollow passage at the back of the throat.

Signs and symptoms of tonsillitis/pharyngitis:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing/ pain with swallowing
- Fever
- Swollen glands in neck
- White patches in your throat or on your tonsils
- Swollen, red tonsils
- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Rash

Tests that may be done to evaluate a sore throat include a rapid strep test (usually takes 5 minutes) or a throat culture (usually takes 2 days for test results to return). A mono test may also be done.

Treatment of a sore throat can include antibiotics if your doctor thinks your infection is caused by a bacteria. Streptococcus is the most common bacteria (Strep throat). However, antibiotics do not work against viruses. Sore throat caused by viruses can last up to 10 days. Sore throat caused by mono can last up to 4 weeks. Tylenol and ibuprofen can be very effective for pain control. Salt water gargles can help shrink swelling of tonsils and pharynx. Throat lozenges or popsicles can also help. Ensure to keep up on your fluids.

Complications of strep throat include:

- Airway can become blocked causing difficulty breathing
- Abscess can occur behind the tonsils and block the airway causing drooling
- Rheumatic fever, scarlet fever
- Inflammation of the kidney (glomerulonephritis)

Return to CostCare or go to the Emergency Room if you develop difficulty breathing, swallowing or begin drooling and having difficulties swallowing you saliva.

