

Sore throat/Pharyngitis

Pharyngitis is defined as inflammation of the back of the throat. It can cause pain, irritation, difficulty swallowing, or scratchiness of the throat. The most common causes of Pharyngitis are viral infections such as a cold or the flu.

Frequent Signs & Symptoms

Pharyngitis typically causes throat pain and difficulty swallowing. Other symptoms may include:

- Redness or inflammation of the throat
- Neck tenderness and swelling
- Pus or white patches on tonsils
- Swollen tonsils
- Laryngitis(hoarseness)/pain with talking

Causes

Viruses such as the common cold or the flu are the most common causes of Pharyngitis but there a number of other things that can cause sore throat such as:

- Other viral illnesses such as mono or measles
- Bacterial infections such as strep
- Allergies especially if postnasal drip is present
- Dryness such as when nasal congestion is present and breathing through the mouth occurs
- Irritants such as chemicals or smoke
- Muscle strain from yelling or talking for long periods of time without rest.
- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease(GERD)

Prevention

Avoiding germs and practicing good hygiene is the best way to avoid infection. Tips for avoiding infection include:

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid sharing food and drinking after others.
- Use alcohol based hand sanitizer when hand washing is unavailable.
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces with sanitizing cleaner.

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Diagnosis

Diagnosis requires an examination of your throat by your health care provider and often requires testing such as a rapid strep test, throat culture, rapid mono screening, or possible blood work.

Treatment

Viral infections usually resolve on their own within 5-7 days and only require symptom management. Over-the-Counter medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used to ease pain and fever. Frequent warm salt water gargles (1/2 teaspoon salt in 1 cup water) can help to relieve sore throat. Also over-the-counter throat lozenges and sprays may help reduce pain. If the sore throat is caused by a bacterial infection such as strep, then your provider will need to prescribe an antibiotic.

Activity

Get plenty of rest and increase fluids.
Avoid irritants.
Humidified air can help.

Diet

You may want to consider a liquid or soft diet while your throat is sore. You may want to try warm liquids such as broth and tea or cold foods such as popsicles or ice cream. Be advised you may want to avoid hard foods such as chips to decrease the risk of choking especially if you have difficulty swallowing or swelling.

If symptoms worsen or do not improve, return to the clinic.

If you have worsening of symptoms when the Health and Wellness Center is unavailable, please follow up with the local ER or Urgent Care.

Additional Information: _____

