

# SORE THROAT

## Patient Information Sheet

### Causes of a sore throat

- Most sore throats are caused by viruses.
- Some sore throats, like strep throat, are caused by bacteria.
- Other causes include:
  - » Allergies
  - » Dry air
  - » Pollution
  - » Smoking or second-hand smoke

### Duration of common sore throat

Most symptoms will resolve in 2 to 10 days.

### See a health care provider for:

- A sore throat lasting longer than one week;
- Difficulty breathing;
- Excessive drooling (young children);
- Temperature higher than 104° F;
- Pus on the back of the throat;
- Rash;
- Blood in saliva or phlegm;
- Symptoms of dehydration.

*If your child is younger than three months and has a fever over 100.4° F, call your provider right away.*

### Treatment

When a sore throat is caused by a virus or irritation from the air, it will improve on its own within 1-2 weeks. Antibiotics will not cure most sore throats. Strep throat is a bacterial infection and can be treated with antibiotics to prevent complications.

### How to feel better

- Get plenty of rest;
- Drink plenty of fluids;
- Soothe a sore throat with ice chips, cold drinks, popsicles, smoothies or milkshakes;
- Use lozenges (only for those over 6 years of age);
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer; and
- Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen to relieve pain or fever. (Check with your provider or pharmacist about which medications are safe for infants and children.)



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