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.)

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

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