

Overview

- Sore throats are very common and usually nothing to worry about. They normally get better by themselves within a week.
- See your GP if your symptoms aren't improving after a week, if you feel hot and shivery, or if you have a weakened immune system from chemotherapy or diabetes, for example.
- **Seek immediate medical attention** (call 999) if:
 - you have difficulty swallowing or breathing;
 - you're drooling;
 - you're making a high-pitched sound as you breathe in (called stridor)
 - your symptoms are severe and getting worse quickly.
- These symptoms can make breathing more difficult and will need assessment by a medical professional.

General support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.
- The **NHS** website provides online health information and guidance www.nhs.uk
- **NHS 111** phone line offers medical help and advice from trained advisers supported by nurses and paramedics. Available 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
- There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, in Crawley and at Lewes Victoria Hospital. www.bsuh.nhs.uk/services/ae/
- **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** can be contacted with your comments and concerns, and to provide general support. PALS@bsuh.nhs.uk
RSCH: 01273 664683.
PRH: 01444 448678
PALS, Royal Sussex County Hospital,
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

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Ref number: 921
Publication Date: February 2019
Review Date: February 2021



NHS

Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Sore Throat

Advice for patients seen in the
Emergency Department



Emergency Department

Royal Sussex County Hospital
Level 5, Thomas Kemp Tower,
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE
01273 696955 extn. 64261

Princess Royal Hospital
Lewes Road, Haywards Heath RH16 4EX
01444 448745

www.bsuh.nhs.uk

Sore throat symptoms

- Sore throats are very common and usually nothing to worry about, normally resolving by themselves within a week.
- Sore throats are usually caused by viruses (like cold or flu) or from smoking. Very occasionally they are caused by bacteria.
- The following conditions can cause a sore throat:
 - laryngitis
 - tonsillitis
 - strep throat (a bacterial infection)
 - glandular fever.

Treatment

- The main treatment for a sore throat is rest, plenty of oral fluids and simple pain relief. To improve the symptoms you can try the following:
 - gargle with warm salty water (children shouldn't try this);
 - drink plenty of water, avoid hot drinks;
 - eat cool or soft foods;
 - avoid smoking or smoky places;
 - suck ice cubes, ice lollies or hard sweets – but don't give young children anything small and hard to suck because of the risk of choking.
- If you have discomfort or a temperature, paracetamol may help. This can be bought without prescription from pharmacies and shops. If you take other cold treatments, check the ingredients before taking paracetamol and only take it as directed as it can be very dangerous to overdose.
- Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen can also help your symptoms but are not suitable for everyone so please talk to your pharmacist about taking them if you are older or have any medical problems. They can cause stomach pain. If they cause any pain, you should stop taking them and contact your GP for advice.

You should see your GP if:

- Your throat isn't better after a week;
- You often get sore throats;
- You're worried about your sore throat;
- You have a sore throat and a very high temperature, or you feel hot and shivery;
- You have a weakened immune system – for example, because of diabetes or chemotherapy.
- Antibiotics don't normally relieve sore throat symptoms or speed up your recovery. They'll only be prescribed if your GP thinks you could have a bacterial infection.

When to come to hospital

- If you are unable to swallow despite medications for pain or are forced to spit out your saliva then you should be seen in your nearest Emergency Department.
- Sometimes, with some stronger pain relief, we may be able to send you home but sometimes you may need to be admitted for further treatment. This may include intravenous fluids, antibiotics and steroids.
- Once things are improving you will be sent home with antibiotics and you should complete the full course of these to prevent recurrence even if you feel well again.