

Sore Throat



Sore throats are usually self-limiting and most resolve within one week. They can be viral or bacterial.

Symptoms include:

- Pain in the throat
- Feeling of a dry, scratchy throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Sore, swollen glands in the neck area
- Redness in the back of the mouth
- A hoarse voice

Red flag symptoms

- Confusion
- Raised respiratory rate/ breathlessness
- Raised heart rate
- Drop in blood pressure
- Stridor (noisy or high pitched sound with breathing)
- Unable to swallow
- Excessive drooling

Self-care advice

- Drink plenty of water
- Eat cool or soft foods
- Take pain relief such as painkillers
- Use local anaesthetics sprays or lozenges, to help with pain relief by numbing the area. They should not be used longer than 5 days.
- Use local antiseptic throat lozenges. Sucking the lozenge also stimulates saliva production.
- Demulcents, such as glycerin, honey and lemon are useful for children, pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Onward referrals

- Continual sore throat
- Severe symptoms that are getting worse quickly

Signposting

- Pharmacy First England - Antibiotics
- Pharmacy First Scotland - Mouthwash and sprays
- Pharmacy First Northern Ireland (selected pharmacies) - Antibiotics
- Sore throat test and treat service (STTT) Wales – Antibiotics
- Private sore throat, test and treat service

The information provided is correct at the time of publication, any information provided should be under the supervision of the Responsible Pharmacist. We hold no responsibility for any decisions made using this information.

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