

Tonsillitis

PATIENT
INFORMATION

This leaflet explains what you can do to help and what you should think about if you have been diagnosed with tonsillitis.

What is tonsillitis?

Tonsillitis is an infection of the tonsils that can be caused by both viruses and bacteria. Typical symptoms include a fever and sore throat. However, tonsillitis does not usually cause coughing or other cold symptoms. Your tonsils will often be swollen and red and it may be painful to touch around your neck. Sometimes your tonsils will develop a yellowish coating.

Tonsillitis usually clears up on its own within a week, whether caused by a virus or bacteria.

What you can do

- Hot or cold drinks can provide relief for some people when they have a sore throat.
- You can also take over-the-counter pain medications to prevent pain when eating or drinking.
- Liquid diet for a few days can also make it easier to eat properly.

You can ask your pharmacist about what else you can do to relieve the symptoms. They can tell you which products are suitable for children of different ages. You can also get medical advice by calling 1177.

What should you be aware of?

The majority of cases of tonsillitis heal within a week. Please contact your healthcare provider again if you

- get significantly worse or do not get better within four days
- develop new problems opening your mouth or swallowing
- have difficulty breathing, severe pain in your throat or your voice becomes 'thick' or muffled
- get a bumpy rash on your body.

In rare cases, some bacteria can cause serious infections such as severe skin infections and sepsis (blood poisoning). If this is the case, a person will quickly become very ill with a high fever and their general health will also deteriorate. If this happens, you must get medical help right away.

Do antibiotics help if you have tonsillitis?

Antibiotics can alleviate the infection and shorten the time during which you experience symptoms by one to two days if the tonsillitis is caused by streptococcal bacteria. If the doctor decides that you or your child need antibiotics, it is important to take the medication as instructed by the doctor.



Folkhälsomyndigheten

Strama

PLEASE TURN OVER... ➤

You stop being contagious after two days taking antibiotics.

There are some mild conditions associated with a sore throat for which you do not need antibiotics, regardless of what caused the infection.

Are there any disadvantages to antibiotics?

Antibiotics are important medications needed for a number of bacterial infections. They must only be taken when there is a clear benefit, as antibiotics also have disadvantages. Antibiotics also kill the 'good' bacteria in your body. Antibiotics can cause side effects, such as diarrhoea and rashes/hives.

The more antibiotics are used in society, the bigger the risk of bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics and more difficult to treat. This is another reason why antibiotics must only be used when there is a benefit. Penicillin is commonly used to treat tonsillitis caused by streptococcal bacteria. It affects antibiotic resistance less than other types of antibiotics.

Notes

Call **1177** if you need medical advice. They will help you assess the symptoms or tell you where you can go for treatment. You can also visit **www.1177.se**

This information was produced by the Public Health Agency of Sweden and Strama, the Swedish strategic programme against antibiotic resistance. The fact sheet is part of the Antibiotic Smart Sweden initiative. The text is based on treatment recommendations from the Swedish Medical Products Agency. The information applies to the expected progression of common infections. The fact sheet can be downloaded in Swedish and several other languages from www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/patinfo-halsfluss

