

Strep Throat

Brief Version

What is strep throat?

Strep throat is a sore throat caused by bacteria. Your doctor will test your child for strep throat with a throat culture or rapid strep test. If your child has strep throat, your doctor will give your child medicine. With this medicine, the fever and much of the sore throat are gone in about 24 hours.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Give antibiotics.** Your child's medicine is _____. Your child's dose is _____, given ____ times a day during waking hours for 10 full days. Try not to forget any of the doses.
- **Help the fever and pain.** Children over age 1 can sip warm chicken broth or apple juice. Children over age 4 can suck on hard candy or lollipops. Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) for throat pain or fever over 102°F (38.9°C).
- **Offer soft foods.** Give your child soft foods for a few days.
- **Don't spread the infection.** Your child cannot spread strep throat to other people after he has taken the medicine for 24 hours. Your child can return to school after 1 day if the fever is gone.
- **Get throat cultures for the family.** Any child or adult who lives in your home and feels sick now or in the next 5 days should have a strep throat test. Your physician will call you if any of the cultures show strep.

Call your child's doctor right away if:

- Your child starts drooling or has great difficulty swallowing.
- Your child is acting very sick.

Call your child's doctor during office hours if:

- The fever lasts over 48 hours after your child starts taking an antibiotic.
- You have other questions or concerns.

Written by B.D. Schmitt, M.D., author of "Your Child's Health," Bantam Books.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.