



KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.
Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

2516 Samaritan Dr., Suite J
San Jose, CA 95124
Phone: (408) 356-0578
Fax (408) 356-3986
www.kjkidmd.com

Strep Throat

Symptoms of strep throat, which is very common among kids and teens, include fever, stomach pain, and red, swollen tonsils.

Strep throat usually requires treatment with antibiotics. With the proper medical care — along with plenty of rest and fluids — a child should be back to school and play within a few days.

How Strep Throat Spreads

Anybody can get strep throat, but it's most common in school-age kids and teens. These infections occur most often during the school year when big groups of kids and teens are in close quarters.

The bacteria that cause strep throat (group A *streptococcus*) tend to hang out in the nose and throat, so normal activities like sneezing, coughing, or shaking hands can easily spread infection from one person to another. Someone whose strep throat isn't treated is most likely to spread the infection when the symptoms are most severe, but can still infect others for up to 3 weeks.

That's why it's so important to teach kids the importance of hand washing — good hygiene can lessen their chances of getting contagious diseases like strep throat.

Strep Throat vs. Sore Throat

Not all sore throats are strep throats. Most episodes of sore throat — which can be accompanied by a runny nose, cough, hoarseness, and red eyes — are caused by viruses and usually clear up on their own without medical treatment.

A child with strep throat will start to develop other symptoms within about 3 days, such as:

- red and white patches in the throat
- difficulty swallowing
- tender or swollen glands (lymph nodes) in the neck
- red and enlarged tonsils





KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.
Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

2516 Samaritan Dr., Suite J
San Jose, CA 95124
Phone: (408) 356-0578
Fax (408) 356-3986
www.kjkidmd.com

headache
lower stomach pain
fever
general discomfort, uneasiness, or ill feeling

loss of appetite and nausea

Diagnosis

If your child has a sore throat and other strep throat symptoms, call your doctor. The doctor will likely do a rapid strep test in the office, using a cotton swab to take a sample of the fluids at the back of the throat. The test only takes about 5 minutes.

If it's positive, your child has strep throat. If it's negative, the doctor will send a sample to a lab for a throat culture. The results are usually available within a few days.

Treatment

In most cases, doctors prescribe about 10 days of antibiotic medication to treat strep throat. Within about 24 hours after starting on antibiotics, your child will probably no longer have a fever and won't be contagious; by the second or third day, other symptoms should start to go away.



Even if your child feels better, he or she should continue to take the antibiotics as prescribed. Otherwise, bacteria can remain in the throat and symptoms can return. Completing all the antibiotics the doctor prescribed is the best way to prevent other health problems that can be caused by a strep infection, such as rheumatic fever (which can permanently damage the heart), scarlet fever, blood infections, or kidney disease.

To prevent your sick child from spreading strep throat to others in your home, keep his or her eating utensils, dishes, and drinking glasses separate and wash them in hot, soapy water after each use.



KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.
Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

2516 Samaritan Dr., Suite J
San Jose, CA 95124
Phone: (408) 356-0578
Fax (408) 356-3986
www.kjkidmd.com

Also, your child shouldn't share food, drinks, napkins, handkerchiefs, or towels with other family members.

Make sure your child covers all sneezes or coughs (if a tissue isn't handy, kids should sneeze or cough into a shirtsleeve, not their hands) to prevent passing infectious droplets to others. Also, have your child use a new toothbrush after the antibiotic treatment starts and he or she is no longer contagious.

Caring for Your Child

You can help your child feel better while battling strep throat. Give plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration, such as water or ginger ale, especially if he or she has had a fever. Avoid orange juice, grapefruit juice, lemonade, or other acidic beverages, which can irritate a sore throat. Warm liquids like soups, sweetened tea, or hot chocolate can be soothing.

Talk to your doctor about when your child can return to school and other normal activities.

Reviewed by: Rupal Christine Gupta, MD
Date reviewed: June 2014



KJARTAN D. ARMANN, M.D.
Infant, Child and Adolescent Medicine

2516 Samaritan Dr., Suite J
San Jose, CA 95124
Phone: (408) 356-0578
Fax (408) 356-3986
www.kjkidmd.com
