



Strep Throat

Strep throat is a common bacterial infection of the throat. It is spread by secretions from an infected person – coughing, sharing a drink, or kissing. There is a rapid test done in the office that detects the presence of strep bacteria from a throat swab. Strep is more common in school age children, but even infants may catch strep if exposed.

It is important to diagnose and treat strep correctly due to rare but serious complications of untreated strep infections, including rheumatic heart disease and glomerulonephritis (Google it for more information).

Cause: Strep throat is caused by strep bacteria in the throat.

Symptoms: The classic symptoms are fever and throat pain. Fever to 103 or 104 degrees is not uncommon with strep throat. Throat pain is present in the majority of cases, but not all cases. Abdominal pain and headache are also common in strep. A fine, red, “sandpaper” rash is seen in 30% of cases.

Treatment: Antibiotics kill the bacteria that cause the infection, and usually lead to resolution of symptoms in 1-2 days. Depending on the antibiotic chosen by your doctor, treatment will last from 5-10 days.

Tylenol (acetaminophen) and Motrin (ibuprofen) may be used to control the fever and pain. Do not use aspirin in children under 18 years of age. Over the counter throat sprays and lozenges may be used in older children.

Follow up: If your child is doing well no follow up is necessary. You should follow up immediately if your child develops any of the following:

- Fever above 104 degrees not responding to medication
- No improvement after two days of medication
- Neck stiffness, neck pain, or headache
- Rash after taking medications
- Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, lethargy, sunken eyes, decreased urine)
- Difficulty swallowing, talking or breathing
- Seizures
- Worsening symptoms

Please note: These guidelines are not meant to diagnose any condition, or treat any condition not diagnosed by a physician. They are provided for general information only. If you are concerned about your child’s condition, call a physician or 911 immediately.