

## **Strep or Sore Throat**

Sore throats can be caused by an infection (viral or bacterial) or irritation (air pollution, allergens, and sinus drainage). It is not possible to tell if a sore throat is caused by Strep just from looking at the throat itself. The symptoms of Strep Throat can resemble the sore throat caused by many viruses and organisms. In fact, most sore throats are not strep, but are caused by viruses. A throat culture or Strep test is needed to accurately diagnose Strep.

### Symptoms of Strep Throat

1. Severe sore throat or sore throat lasting more than 2 - 3 days.
2. Fever
3. Headache
4. Abdominal pain
5. Nausea/vomiting
6. Bright red tonsils that might have white patches
7. Swollen glands

To help soothe a sore throat there are some things you can do at home to help relieve the discomfort.

1. Gargle with weak, warm salt water. 1/4 teaspoon of salt to 4 ounces of water.
2. Drink a mixture of tea, lemon and honey
3. Drink cold liquids or popsicles
4. Avoid citrus products like orange juice

Please notify me if your child is diagnosed and started on medication. This helps me to know which classrooms and students may exhibit infection. It is important to exclude children/staff from school for 24 hours minimum after the START of their medication. Children/adults also need to be fever free for 24 hours. This is a policy followed through the Bureau of Health.

It is important to remember that whether or not a sore throat is caused by a virus or bacteria, it is contagious. Preventing infection is helped by:

- Good hand washing
- Not sharing eating, drinking utensils
- Giving each child his/her own snack and not having everyone's hands enter boxes/bags of snacks

This is also a time for me to reinforce how imperative it is to complete the full course of antibiotics. Even though your child may be feeling better, the bacteria continue to produce toxins until the dose is complete. Also, please remember not to give children or teenagers and aspirin containing products. This has been associated with Reye's syndrome, an illness involving the liver and central nervous system.