

Emergency Department Sore Throat

General Information

A sore throat is often painful and the throat is red and swollen. It is either a sign of illness or the result of something in the environment that is irritating your throat. The most common cause is a viral infection. Other causes include bacterial infection, allergic reactions, irritation from smoking, alcohol use, or chemical fumes. Depending on the cause of your sore throat, you may also have a fever, swelling in your neck glands, a runny nose, a cough, itchy eyes, or voice hoarseness.

Instructions

1. Gargle with a mouthwash or warm salt water (1 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water) several times a day.
2. Suck on throat lozenges, hard candy, or drink cool fluids to help ease the irritation.
3. Use a cool mist humidifier (vaporizer) to increase air moisture. This will help relieve the tight, dry feeling in your throat. **DO NOT** use hot steam.
4. **DO NOT** smoke or drink alcoholic beverages while your throat is sore.
5. Try eating only soft foods or drinking liquids to give you comfort.
6. **DO NOT** share eating utensils while your throat is sore.
7. If your doctor states you are able to take ibuprofen, this medication is often effective in treatment of throat pain. Take it regularly for pain. Even if you are prescribed antibiotics, they do not treat pain.

See your Family Doctor if any of the following develop:

- You cough up green, yellow or brown mucous.
- You have persistent high fever or swollen glands in your neck.

Return to Emergency if any of the following develop:

- You develop severe throat pain, drooling, or difficulty breathing.
- You cannot swallow water or saliva.

For more information or questions contact HealthLinkBC at 811.

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