

Strep Throat

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

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en Español 

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.

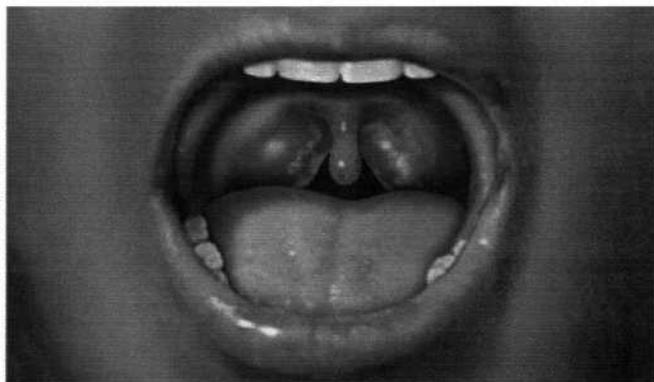
That's why it's so important to teach kids the importance of hand washing — good hygiene can lessen their chances of getting contagious diseases like strep throat.

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
- headache
- lower stomach pain
- fever
- general discomfort, uneasiness, or ill feeling
- loss of appetite and nausea
- rash



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.