HOW DO I GET RELIEF FROM MY SORE THROAT?

Sore throat is very common and, although it’s painful and uncomfortable, it’s usually nothing to worry about. Most sore throats get better on their own within a few days.

EFFECTIVE, RAPID SYMPTOMATIC TREATMENT FOR THE PAIN AND INFLAMMATION OF SORE THROAT

Formulation Local delivery to the throat

Relieves pain

Anti-inflammatory action

Soothes and coats the throat

Low dose, so there is a low risk of side effects

Notes

Lozenges or sprays (e.g. flurbiprofen) 10,11,17–21

Ibuprofen tablets 23–25

Paracetamol tablets 26

Medicated lozenges (antiseptic/anaesthetic) 27–30

Lozenge dissolves slowly to release active ingredients for pain relief 27–30

References


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Produced and distributed by RB with the support of GRIP, which was convened and funded by RB. The Global Respiratory Infection Partnership (GRIP) is an international group of healthcare professionals committed to reducing inappropriate antibiotic use for respiratory tract infections in primary care and the wider community, helping to counteract antibiotic resistance.

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WHAT CAUSES A SORE THROAT?
- Up to 8 out of 10 sore throats are caused by viruses, such as those that cause colds or flu.
- The pain and discomfort of a sore throat, whether it is viral or bacterial, is due to inflammation of the throat tissues as your body fights the infection.

HOW LONG DOES A SORE THROAT LAST?
- Sore throats are usually at their worst during the first 3 days but they generally get better on their own within 1 week.

ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED FOR MOST SORE THROATS
- Antibiotics do not work against viruses which cause up to 8 out of 10 sore throats.
- Antibiotics don’t have any direct pain-relieving effects, so your sore throat will remain painful with or without antibiotics.
- Antibiotics can cause side effects and disrupt the bacteria in your gut that are important for your health and immune system.
- Sore throat can be treated with symptomatic relief products.

DON’T HELP BACTERIA BECOME RESISTANT
LISTEN TO YOUR DOCTOR AND PHARMACIST – ONLY TAKE ANTIBIOTICS IF YOU NEED TO
- When you take antibiotics, bacteria in your body can become resistant to the antibiotic.
- The resistant bacteria can be spread to family and friends, making it harder to treat them.

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST ABOUT THE RIGHT RELIEF FOR YOUR SORE THROAT
- Your pharmacy has treatments that can rapidly relieve the pain and inflammation of a sore throat.
- They can also advise if you need to see a doctor.

RECOVERY IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3
ASSESS YOUR SYMPTOMS
- Help your pharmacist by providing a full description of your symptoms and any concerns that you have.
- Describe which symptoms are bothering you most, and how long you have had them.

BEAT YOUR SYMPTOMS
- Your pharmacist will tell you if she or he thinks you should see your doctor.
- Ask your pharmacist to recommend the best treatment for your symptoms.

CARE FOR YOURSELF
- Drink plenty of fluids and rest.
- Choose a treatment to meet your needs: there are throat lozenges and sprays that contain ingredients to combat your sore throat – for example, with pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory effects.
- Remember: antibiotics won’t stop the symptoms of a viral infection.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOUR SORE THROAT DOESN’T IMPROVE OR GETS WORSE
- If your symptoms do not improve after 1 week, or if they get worse or you develop new symptoms (such as fever), contact your doctor for more advice.
- If your doctor decides to prescribe an antibiotic, take the whole course. Don’t stop taking the antibiotic early, even if your symptoms go away and you start to feel better. Stopping the antibiotic early could leave some bacteria in your body that could make you feel unwell again. These remaining bacteria could also become antibiotic resistant.
- You will still need a treatment to relieve your painful sore throat symptoms, which antibiotics won’t relieve.