

# Self Care- Sore Throat

## What causes a sore throat?

Sore throats are common. Most people will have 2 to 3 sore throats per year. They are more common in children and teenagers, because young people haven't built up resistance (immunity) to many of the bugs that cause sore throats. A sore throat is usually a symptom of a viral infection. Many people will have some other symptoms as well as a sore throat, including:

- Runny or blocked nose
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- A cough.

## Do I Need Any Tests?

No, not usually. There are some special circumstances when your GP may choose to offer some tests for a sore throat, but these are rare.

## How Can It Be Treated?

Usually no medical treatment is required from the doctor and most sore throats can be managed without having to see your GP. Over the counter medicine such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can help to ease the pain and reduce your temperature, should it be raised, if they are taken regularly. Drinking plenty of fluid can help. Because sore throats are usually caused by viruses, antibiotics often don't help.

## How Long Will It Last?

Usually between 3 and 7 days. 40% of people find their symptoms have gone after 3 days, and 85% of people find their symptoms have gone within a week.

## When Should I See a Doctor?

- If your symptoms continue to get steadily worse after 3 days, or haven't got completely better after two weeks
- If your symptoms are severe, for example if you are unable to fully close your mouth, or you are unable to drink any fluids
- If you have a sore throat and take certain medications that alter your immunity (such as DMARD drugs, chemotherapy, or drugs taken after an organ transplant)
- If you have a sore throat and have certain medical problems which alter your immunity (such as HIV).

## Source NHS choices

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If you would like further advice contact NHS Direct on 08454647 or see [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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