

Tonsillitis

Children's Ward Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have tonsillitis. It gives information on what it is and how it can be treated.

What is tonsillitis?

Tonsillitis means inflammation (swelling) of the tonsils. The tonsils are two glands at the back of the throat. In children, they help the body fight off infection. As a child's immune system develops and gets stronger, tonsils become less important and often shrink.

What causes tonsillitis?

It is usually caused by a virus, such as the cold or flu virus. However, sometimes it can be caused by bacteria. The doctors may have mentioned a common type called streptococcus – this causes what doctors sometimes call 'strep throat'.

The infection can spread from person to person through coughing, sneezing, hand contact and kissing. You can help prevent other people from getting it by washing your hands regularly, and coughing or sneezing into a tissue and throwing these away.

What are the symptoms?

Everyone is different but you may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Sore throat – this is the most common symptom
- Difficulty or pain when swallowing, eating or drinking
- Earache
- Headache
- Feeling or being sick

You may also have:

- A high temperature
- Swollen glands in your neck
- White spots of pus at the back of your throat
- A skin rash

What is the treatment?

Most of the time tonsillitis is not very serious. Although it may be painful, it does not need any specific treatment. Antibiotics do not work if the cause is a virus. Your immune system, which is the body's own defence against infection, will fight off the infection.

If the tonsillitis is caused by bacteria and you have very bad symptoms, or if you have a weakened immune system, the doctors may prescribe antibiotics such as penicillin to help kill the bacteria.

It is important to take all the days of antibiotics prescribed by your doctor even if you are feeling better. This is to make sure the infection is properly treated and to reduce the chances of it coming back.

What can I do to help myself?

Some things that can help you feel better include:

- Making sure you rest and get plenty of sleep.
- Have lots of drinks.

- Taking paracetamol or ibuprofen to reduce the pain, if you can take them. Paracetamol will also help bring down a high temperature. You must always read the label on this medicine and not take more than it says on the label.
- Gargling salt water may help reduce pain in your throat.
- Eating soft foods, if you are having difficulty swallowing.

When should I ask for further advice?

You should ask your parent/carer to take you to your family doctor or ring 111 if you:

- Have difficulty swallowing, or cannot drink or swallow saliva (you may find you are dribbling a lot)
- Have difficulty breathing
- Have a high temperature that does not go down
- Are being sick and cannot keep fluids down
- Have very bad pain, especially if it is mainly on one side
- Have symptoms that are still not getting better after three to four days

How long will I be unwell for?

Most people start to feel better after three to four days and you should be back to normal after about a week.

Will I need to have my tonsils taken out?

You will not need to have your tonsils taken out unless you get lots of bad attacks of tonsillitis every year. In this case, you and your parent/carer may want to discuss the possibility of an operation to take out your tonsils, and the risks and benefits of this, with your family doctor.

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblink:

NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/tonsillitis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/paediatrics-and-neonatology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم 08000730510.

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ براہ مہربانی فون نمبر 08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔