

Most sore throats are not serious and pass within three to seven days without the need for medical treatment. There are some treatments you can use at home to relieve your symptoms. Over-the-counter painkillers, like paracetamol or ibuprofen can usually relieve the symptoms of a sore throat without the need to see a GP.



## Self-care tips

If you or someone in your family has a sore throat, the tips below may help relieve the symptoms:

- Avoid food or drink that is too hot as this could irritate your throat
- Eat cool, soft food and drink cool or warm liquids
- Adults and older children can suck lozenges, hard sweets, ice cubes or ice lollies
- Avoid smoking and smoky environments
- Regularly gargle with a mouthwash of warm, salty water to reduce any swelling or pain
- Drink enough fluids, especially if you have a high temperature (fever)

## Don't pass it on

- **CATCH IT** Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.
- **BIN IT** Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.
- **KILL IT** Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

## Painkillers

For treating sore throats, over-the-counter painkillers, like paracetamol or ibuprofen are usually recommended. These may also help reduce a fever (high temperature). You should not take aspirin or ibuprofen if you have (or have had in the past)

stomach problems like a peptic ulcer, or liver or kidney problems. Children under 16 years of age should never be given aspirin. Take painkillers as necessary to relieve your pain. Always read the manufacturer's instructions so you do not exceed the recommended or prescribed dose.

## Antibiotics

The use of antibiotics is not usually recommended for treating sore throats. This is because:

- Most sore throats are not caused by bacteria
- Even if your sore throat is caused by bacteria, antibiotics have very little effect on the severity of the symptoms and how long they last, and may cause unpleasant side effects
- Overusing antibiotics to treat minor ailments can make them less effective in the treatment of life-threatening conditions

(see next page)



For more information, help and support go to [www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk](http://www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk) or visit NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**Choose the right care**

### Persistent sore throat

If you have a persistent sore throat (a sore throat that lasts three to four weeks), your GP may refer you for further tests. This is because your sore throat may be a symptom of a more serious condition.



## What to do next...



### Choose care at home if...

- You have a sore throat
- Follow the self care instructions above and it will clear up in a few days



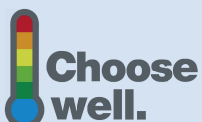
### Choose your GP or GP out-of-hours service if...

- You have difficulty swallowing (dysphagia), are not being able to swallow enough fluids or have drooling
- You have a persistent (lasting several days) high temperature above 38C (100.4F), which is not reduced by medication
- Your symptoms do not improve after two weeks
- You have frequent sore throats that do not respond to painkillers
- Have a weakened immune system (the body's defence system), for example because of HIV and AIDS
- Take certain medications, like disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDs), used to treat arthritis



### Call 999 A&E if...

- You have difficulty breathing
- You have a high-pitched sound as you breathe (stridor)
- You have a muffled voice
- You have severe pain



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**Choose the right care**