



Sore throat

Generally speaking, a sore throat is nothing serious. Anyone can develop a sore throat, which can vary in length, and may or may not be accompanied by other symptoms.

Causes

A sore throat has many causes. It is often associated with an infection, pharyngitis or tonsillitis. In most cases however, it is the result of a viral infection rather than a bacterial infection. It can also be caused by mononucleosis.

Symptoms

Sore throat may be accompanied by a host of other symptoms:

- Pus in the throat
- Fever
- Congestion
- Runny nose
- Cough

How can sore throat be relieved?

In most cases, you do not need to consult your doctor. A few very simple measures are usually enough to relieve any discomfort:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Mix 2.5 mL of salt in a cup of water and gargle
- Take acetaminophen
- Suck on throat lozenges
- Rest your voice
- Keep the indoor temperature around 20°C and humidity around 40 to 50%

Choosing a throat lozenge: a throat lozenge provide relief by increasing saliva production and lubrication in the mouth and throat. Its effect is often temporary. Antibacterial throat lozenges are not necessary. If you opt for one that has anesthetic properties, avoid drinking hot beverages or eating immediately after having taken one.

When should you consult your doctor?

Seek immediate medical advice if you have a sore throat and any of the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing that does not improve or that worsens
- Wheezing or noisy breathing
- Pinkish sputum
- Severe difficulty swallowing one's saliva, eating or drinking
- Signs of dehydration

Seek medical advice as promptly as possible if your sore throat lasts more than 3 days, or if you have any of the following symptoms:

- White spots at the back of your throat
- Persistent fever over 39°C

The doctor may perform a throat culture. An antibiotic will be prescribed only if you have a bacterial infection. Given that most sore throats are caused by a viral infection, it is unlikely that you will need an antibiotic.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to speak to your pharmacist.