



## Signs & Symptoms

- Dry, irritated throat.
- Soreness or pain in the throat, especially when you talk or swallow. Swollen neck glands.
- The back of the throat and/or the tonsils look bright red or have pus deposits or white spots.
- Enlarged tonsils that feel tender (tonsillitis).

Fatigue, fever, postnasal drip, bad breath, headache, and/or earache can also occur.

## Treatment

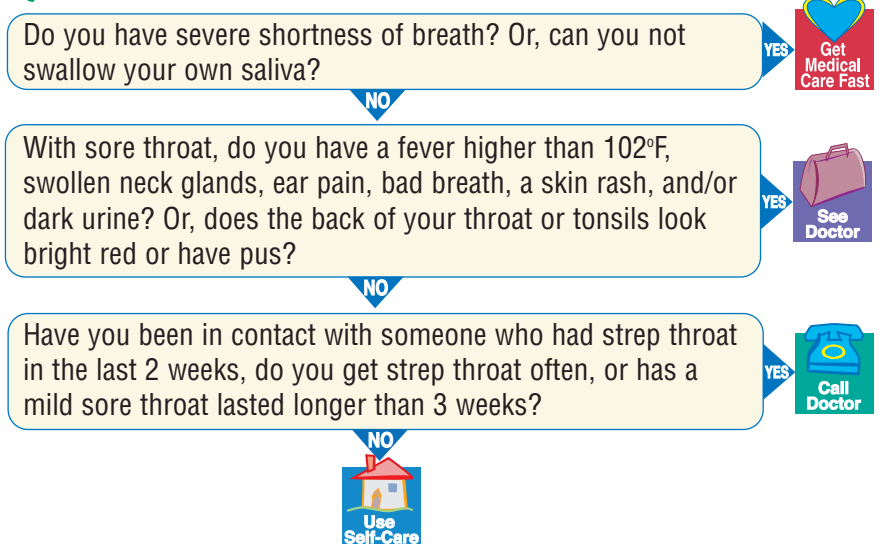
Self-care treats most sore throats. Your doctor may take a throat culture to see if strep or another type of bacteria is the cause. If so, an antibiotic may be prescribed. Strep throat needs medical care to prevent other health problems. Sore throats caused by viruses **do not** need an antibiotic.

# Sore Throats

## Causes

- Smoking. Dry air. Postnasal drip. Cough. Allergies.
- Viruses, such as with a cold or the flu. (See **Colds & Flu** at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com).)
- Infection from bacteria, such as strep throat.

## Questions to Ask



## Self-Care / Prevention

- Don't smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Gargle every few hours with a solution of 1/4 teaspoon of salt dissolved in 1 cup of warm water. Don't eat spicy foods.
- Drink plenty of fluids like warm tea. For strep throat, have cold foods and liquids.
- Sit in the bathroom while hot water runs in the shower. Use a cool-mist vaporizer in the room where you spend most of your time.
- Suck on a piece of hard candy or throat lozenge every so often. (Don't give to children under age 5.) Rest your voice, if this helps.
- Take an over-the-counter (OTC) medicine for pain as directed on the label. Take an OTC decongestant for postnasal drip, if okay with your doctor. (See information on **Decongestant** use at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com).)