



Tonsillitis

Information for parents

What is Tonsillitis?

Tonsillitis is inflammation of the tonsils, usually due to a viral infection, sometimes due to a bacterial infection. It is common in children.

What are the tonsils?

The tonsils are 2 small glands at the back of the throat behind the tongue. They act as a barrier against infection in children whose immune system is still developing. They do this by helping to prevent infection spreading any further into the body.

Who is affected?

Tonsillitis is very common in children. Almost all children will have at least 1 episode of tonsillitis as they grow up.

Common symptoms of tonsillitis:

- Sore throat that may feel worse when swallowing.
- High temperature (above 38 degrees).
- Headache.
- Tiredness.
- Pain in the ears or neck, swollen lymph nodes (glands) in the neck.
- White spots on the tonsils.
- Loss of, or changes to, the voice.

Less common symptoms:

- Being sick.
- 'Furry' tongue.
- Difficulty opening the mouth.

What causes tonsillitis?

Most cases are caused by a virus such as the common cold or the flu virus. Some cases are caused by a strain of bacteria called Group A Streptococcus. These type of infections are easily spread and the most effective way of stopping infection spreading is by:

- Keeping your child away from school or nursery until your GP says it is safe for them to return (usually once the symptoms have gone).
- Coughing/sneezing into a tissue and putting it in the bin.
- Good hand hygiene (washing hands before eating, after going to the toilet and after coughing and sneezing).

What treatment will my child need?

If tests show that a bacterial infection is the cause, a short course of antibiotics may be prescribed.

For viral cases there is no specific treatment; however certain things can help alleviate symptoms such as drinking plenty of fluids, rest and paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain

Follow the instructions on the bottle.

Paracetamol was last given at.....and can be taken again if needed 4-6 hourly.

Ibuprofen may also be given. Last given at..... and can be taken again if needed 6-8 hourly. Please follow the instructions on the bottle.

Complications/further care

Complications of tonsillitis are usually rare and occur more often in cases of *bacterial* tonsillitis. They are usually the result of the infection spreading into other parts of the body. Follow the instructions given by the hospital or your GP in these cases.

For further advice please contact

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