

Sore Throat Home Treatment

Iowa State University

Thielen Student Health Center



Sore throat pain can present for a number of reasons, including:

- Nasal congestion
- Sinus drainage during allergy seasons (spring and fall)
- Sleeping/breathing with your mouth open
- Viral infections
- Bacterial infections

To help keep the throat pain/irritation to a minimum, following are some over the counter medications and home cares:

If not allergic and you have no pre-existing liver, kidney or stomach concerns, use of acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®) or aspirin for discomfort or fever (avoiding acetaminophen with liver concerns, ibuprofen with kidney concerns or aspirin for stomach concerns).

- Gargling with salt water several times daily or sipping warm chicken broth with help ease discomfort and sluff any exudate that can accumulate on tonsils or throat.
- Throat lozenges (Halls®, Luddens®, Ricola® or generic brands of these, etc)
- Increasing fluids and sipping warm liquids throughout the day, such as tea with lemon and honey, apple juice or sucking on flavored ice can also help with discomfort.
- If you are a smoker, decreasing or stopping will help, by not drying out the membranes in the throat.
- Using a humidifier or vaporizer at night while sleeping to keep air moist.
- Use of a decongestant to help with congestion of that is a concern; if there is a history of hypertension or pregnancy, talk to your PCP or a pharmacist prior to taking.

If you have any chronic health concerns that are followed by a provider, such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, thyroid disorders, hypertension, please contact a provider to assess if you should be seen sooner than those who are otherwise healthy.

SIGNS TO WATCH FOR AND CONTACT A PROVIDER:

- Fever greater than 101 degrees for more than 3 days
- Sore throat that last longer than 3 days
- Earache that accompanies sore throat
- Drooling
- Skin rash
- Red or enlarged tonsils
- Yellow pus or white mucus at back of throat

EMERGENCY SIGNS TO WATCH FOR:

- Unable to swallow own saliva
- Difficulty breathing
- Chest pain
- Excessive drooling
- Unable to open mouth fully

If you have any questions or concerns consult your provider or contact the Thielen Student Health Center at (515) 294-5801.