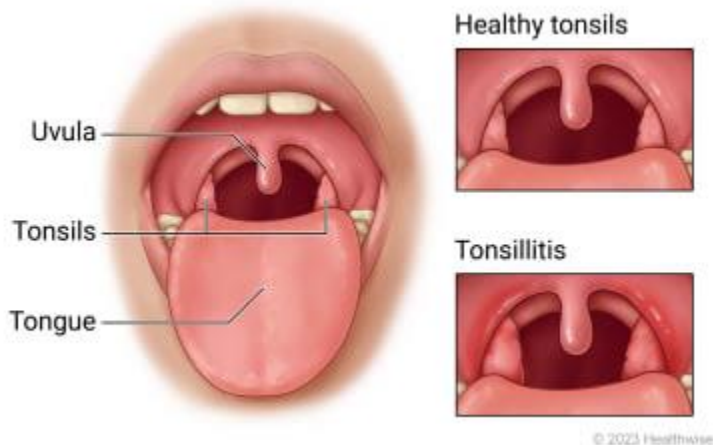


## Tonsillitis: Care Instructions



### Overview

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Tonsillitis is an infection or inflammation of the tonsils that is caused by bacteria or a virus. The tonsils are in the back of the throat and are part of the immune system. Tonsillitis typically lasts from a few days up to a couple of weeks.

Tonsillitis caused by a virus goes away on its own. Tonsillitis caused by the bacteria that causes strep throat is treated with antibiotics.

You and your doctor may consider surgery to remove the tonsils (tonsillectomy) if you have serious complications or repeat infections.

**Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.** Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

### How can you care for yourself at home?

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- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- Gargle with warm salt water several times a day to help reduce swelling and relieve pain. Mix 1/2 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water.
- Take an over-the-counter pain medicine, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Be safe with medicines. Read and follow all instructions on the label. No one younger than 20 should take aspirin. It has been linked to Reye syndrome, a serious illness.
- Be careful when taking over-the-counter cold or flu medicines and Tylenol at the same time. Many of these medicines have acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Read the labels to make sure that you are not taking more than the recommended dose. Too much acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be harmful.
- Try lozenges or an over-the-counter throat spray to relieve throat pain.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Fluids may help soothe an irritated throat. Drink warm or cold liquids (whichever feels better). These include tea, soup, ice, and flavored ice pops (such as Popsicles).
- If you smoke, try to quit. If you can't quit, cut back as much as you can. Smoking can interfere with healing. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.

- Use a vaporizer or humidifier to add moisture to the area where you sleep. Follow the directions for cleaning the machine.
- Get plenty of rest.

### When should you call for help?

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**Call your doctor now** or seek immediate medical care if:

- Your pain gets worse on one side of your throat.
- You have a new or higher fever.
- You notice changes in your voice.
- You have trouble opening your mouth.
- You have any trouble breathing.
- You have much more trouble swallowing.
- You have a fever with a stiff neck or a severe headache.
- You are sensitive to light or feel very sleepy or confused.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You do not get better after 2 days.