The Sore Throat Removal Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sore throats are one of the most common health complaints in the US. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, about 16 million to 18 million people seek medical care for this ailment annually. The good thing about sore throats is that about 90% is caused by viral infections and as such are easily treated. The bad thing about sore throats is that most of its symptoms are the same as with the signs that characterize more serious, bacterial-related ones – making you prone to ignore important danger signs.

A case in point is strep throat which is caused by the Group A beta-hemolytic streptococcus bacteria. This illness is a good representation of the thin line between a sore throat born out of a viral infection (such as colds and flu) and a bacterial infection. Starting out with classic sore throat symptoms, strep throat, if left untreated, can cause rheumatic heart disease later in life. So PAY ATTENTION to your body (throat) and consider any accompanying symptoms to your sore throat. This will save you much agony and expenses in treatments.

This report aims to provide you with the basic know-how to enable you to (a) treat an occurrence of sore throat, (b) empower you to observe other symptoms that require more aggressive medical attention, and (c) inhibit the occurrence of future sore throat incidences.

Home Remedies 101 lists numerous inexpensive ways of treating the common sore throat. It lists tried and tested treatments that are most likely sitting in your kitchen or medicine cabinet already.

Danger Signs - When to Consult Your Doctor enables you to conduct a simple observation at home regarding your current illness and decide on whether you should go seek further medical care or not.

Even if it’s a mild one, who would ever want to experience sore throats?!? An Ounce of Prevention enumerates the ways you can prevent even the occurrence of this ailment.

Finally, this report lists and answers all your frequently asked questions about this common but potentially dangerous disease.
Sore Throat Defined

A sore throat is a disease that occurs mainly in the area around the tonsils as a result of your immune system reacting to an infection or allergen which in turn initiates a surge of inflammatory chemicals like histamines and leukotrienes that irritate the throat’s membranes. Depending on where in particular the sore throat occurs, this condition may also be known as pharyngitis, laryngitis or tonsillitis. (See Figure 1 for a basic throat diagram.)

Basic characteristics of this disease range from mild discomfort or scratchiness in the throat to severe pain when trying to swallow. It occurs mostly during the colder months of the year because this is when humidity is low and respiratory diseases are most common.

In addition, sore throats can either be a warning sign for a coming cold or flu OR the result of bacterial infection that may require a more thorough analysis and treatment. At the onset of a sore throat, pay attention to its conditions and your body’s responses.

Sore Throat Symptoms

Classic indicators of an impending sore throat include a scratchy feeling at the back of the throat, mild pain especially when trying to swallow and even general sensitivity along the neck. These symptoms may be accompanied by classic cold symptoms such as general fatigue, a runny nose, sneezing and coughing, and a stuffy head.

Common Causes

Equally important (if not more) to treating a sore throat is finding out its cause. The golden rule is this – if your throat is hot and phlegmy, then it is most likely the cause of viral infection brought about by the cold or flu season; if your throat is dry and raspy, then it is the result of the misuse of your vocal chords, allergies or exposure to pollutants.1

Viral Infections

The most common cause of sore throats, approximately 90% of all cases, is the inflammation of throat tissue brought about by viruses. Most of the time, this type of sore throat occurs together with a runny nose, flu, cold and general body aches. More serious conditions accompany whooping cough, measles and even chicken pox.

Figure 1 The anatomy of the throat.
Even more severe is the ‘kissing disease’ – mononucleosis or mono. This infection, caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, settles in the lymph system thereby causing a substantial enlargement of the tonsils. This is further characterized by the appearance of white patches on the tonsil and swollen glands in the neck areas, armpits and groin! Mono can be transmitted by saliva and is a serious ailment amongst teenagers; hence it’s more popular nickname.

As a viral infection, you should NOT take antibiotics to cure this type of sore throat. Even if you take an antibiotic, your body will not respond to it anyway and only cause your body to get used to antibiotics in general, thereby reducing its effectiveness during times when you really need to take one, not to mention the dangers of exposing yourself to the hazards of antibiotic overuse.†

**Bacterial Infections**

Another cause of sore throats is bacterial infections, of which the streptococcus bacterium, which produces the ailment known as strep throat, is the most common culprit. Arcanobacterium is also known to cause sore throats. It is most common in young adults and is sometimes linked to the presence of red rashes.

People engaging in oral sex are also candidates for sore throats under this type. This is because the bacteria *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, which causes gonorrhea, can ‘lodge’ in the throat. Left untreated, the infection may spread into the bloodstream, thereby causing a rare but serious disease called disseminated gonococcal infection.²

Other samples of bacterial infections causing sore throats include tonsillitis (an infection of the lumpy tissues on either side of the back of the throat) nose and sinus diseases, and epiglottitis. Of these, epiglottitis is the most dangerous as it is caused by bacteria that contaminate a portion of the larynx (voice box).

**Dry Air**

Dry, dusty air is another common cause of sore throats. For example, if you sleep with your mouth open, you will have a sore throat during most mornings because of ‘sucking up’ all that dry air. This is because, normally, your nose moistens the air that’s headed to your throat and lungs. Breathing through your mouth bypasses this step and so you wake up with a very dry throat.

**Other Causes**

Other sources of sore throats include postnasal drip (mucus trickling down from the back of the nose to the throat as a result of severe colds or allergies), cigarette smoke, straining your vocal chords (like in a REALLY good football game), frequent alcohol intake and an aversion to allergies.

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† For a full excerpt on the dangers of antibiotic overuse, see the article **Death by Medicine** by Gary Null, PhD; Carolyn Dean MD, ND; Martin Feldman, MD; Debora Rasio, MD; and Dorothy Smith, PhD. [http://www.lef.org/magazine/mag2004/mar2004_awsi_death_03.htm](http://www.lef.org/magazine/mag2004/mar2004_awsi_death_03.htm)
Home Remedies 101

As mentioned, viral infections are the most common sore throat culprits. The ‘advantage’ of this is that most remedies can be found in our trusty old medicine cabinets or kitchen cupboards. Really, it does not cost much to get rid of a sore throat. Just follow these time and tested solutions and nurse your way back to good health!

1. **SUCK ON LOZENGES!** Lozenges are not only the most common remedy, it is also considered by some doctors as the most effective treatment for viral infection-caused sore throats.

   a. For sore throats linked to a cold, take a 23 mg zinc gluconate tablet every 2 hours. However, dissolve it in your mouth rather than simply swallowing it. If the taste of zinc is simply too much to your liking, substitute it with zinc lozenges.\(^1\)

      **CAUTION:** If the lozenges make you dizzy, stop immediately. This may be a sign of zinc toxicity. As a general rule, zinc lozenges should not be taken for more than a week.

   b. For sore throats caused by a viral infection, suck on phenol-containing lozenges. The phenol kills surface germs and has a slight anesthetic effect that can numb raw nerve endings. As a result, your throat will not feel as irritated.

2. For sore throats caused by inflamed tissue, take **Iceland Moss**. Also known as *Eryngo-leaved Liverwort*, Iceland Moss is actually lichen that is famous for its organic acids which defend against infection and soothe inflamed tissue. Prepare 1 to 2 teaspoons of chopped Iceland Moss and pour boiling water onto it. Let it steep for about 10 minutes, strain and drink the resulting brew. If the real thing is not available, you can purchase BIO-HEALTH Iceland Moss capsules (450 mg) online from Auravita.

3. **Look inside your kitchen.**
   a. **Eat fresh garlic.** Garlic (*Allium sativum*) contains an anti-viral and anti-bacterial agent and as such helps speed up

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\text{Garlic Chew}\\
3-4 \text{ cloves garlic (minced VERY FINE)}\\
1 \text{ tbsp. honey}\\
1/8 \text{ tsp. cayenne}\\
\text{Mix all ingredients together and a take a teaspoonful as needed. Don’t just swallow the mixture and don’t drink anything immediately afterward.}
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\text{Sage Gargle}\\
1 \text{ cup of sage tea}\\
1 \text{ tbsp sea salt}\\
1 \text{ tbsp apple cider vinegar}\\
\text{Pinch of cayenne}\\
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\text{Elm Bark Throat Syrup}\\
1 \text{ tbsp elm bark}\\
\frac{1}{2} \text{ cup honey}\\
\text{Mix the herb with one part boiling water. Remove from heat and then add the honey. Store in a sterilized bottle and take 1 tsp every 3-4 hours.}
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\text{Indian Ginger Tea}\\
\frac{1}{4} \text{ cup of thinly sliced fresh ginger}\\
3 \text{ cups water}\\
1 \text{ tbsp. honey}\\
\text{In a small saucepan, bring the water to boil and then add the fresh ginger. Simmer for about 15-20 minutes or longer for a stronger brew. If it tastes TOO strong, add more water.}
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Strain the tea and sweeten with the honey to taste.
recovery. Garlic pills may also be taken but FRESH is BEST!

b. **GARGLE GALORE.** The important thing is to try and get the solution as far back in your throat as possible, without actually drinking the solution, to reach the infected area. Tilt your head back and gargle for a full minute or as long as you can for best results.

i. Gargle a **water and salt solution**; dilute about one teaspoon of table salt into a pint of warm water. This will copy the body’s natural saline content and as such will be very soothing. Do this about 4 to 5 times a day.

ii. Gargle a **sage solution** every hour.

iii. Mix up a **turmeric solution** by mixing 1 teaspoon of the spice with a cup of hot water. Turmeric (*Cucuma longa*) contains curcumin, a powerful anti-inflammatory, and astringent elements that dry out phlegmy throats and antimicrobial agents to battle infection.

iv. Put together a **cinnamon mixture** by soaking a cinnamon stick in a cup of COLD water. Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum cassia*), an antibacterial spice, is effective because of its mucilage, a water-soluble fiber that coats and protects the throat.

v. If suffering from a sore throat as a result of overuse or allergies, mix 2 teaspoons of **sesame oil** with a cup of water, according to herbalist Karta Purkh Singh Khalsa of Seattle.

c. **WRAP IT UP.** These wraps aid in improving blood circulation in the area of your throat.

i. Make a **chamomile wrap**. Mix a teaspoon of dried chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) flowers with 1 or 2 cups of boiling water. Leave it for about 5 minutes and then strain. Dip a clean cloth into the ‘tea’, wring out the excess liquid and then wrap the cloth around your throat. Repeat as necessary using a hot solution each time.

ii. Put together a **salt plaster**. Mix 2 full cups of sea salt with 5 to 6 tablespoons of lukewarm water. Spread a towel and place the damp (not wet) salt mixture in the center. Roll the towel and wrap it around your neck. Place a dry towel on top of it and leave on for as long as you like.

d. **MEDICATE.**

i. For IMMEDIATE RELIEF of sore throats, try this Amish remedy - **red cayenne pepper throat drops**. The cayenne pepper helps reduce the amount of pain-causing chemicals produced by the throat’s nerve endings.
ii. Make your own **elm bark throat syrup**. 
Elm bark (*ulmus fulvus*) is abundant in mucilage, a complex combination of polysaccharides that form a soothing gelatinous fiber when water is added. It was first used by First Nations peoples and then later by European colonists for various applications. Because of this herb’s strong reputation as a reliable cure, it is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration as a nonprescription demulcent (soothing agent) that can be taken internally.

2. **Look inside your medicine cabinet.**
   a. Bring out two aspirins. However, do NOT swallow the pills. Crush it and dilute it in warm water and then GARGLE the mixture.
   b. Mix an equal amount of water and hydrogen peroxide and use this as a gargle solution.
   c. Take extra doses of Vitamin C. You can either suck on a 100 mg or 500 mg tablet or take it in liquid form, allowing it to slide and sit for awhile on your throat.
   d. Bring out your stock of saline nasal spray. Inhaling the salt-based spray dampens your nose and finds its way down your throat thereby increasing the humidity in that area.
   e. Take over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol Sore Throat®, Tempra®) or ibuprofen (Motrin IB®, Advil®). For adults, it is recommended to consume even up to 800 mg of ibuprofen. Still, consult your doctor before taking large doses of OTC drugs.

3. **Drink up!** Most of these ingredients can be bought at your neighborhood herbal or health food stores.
   a. Brew a nice pot of **licorice tea**. Licorice (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis*) is an antibacterial and antiviral root that's been used for centuries and believed to relieve achy throats. 
      **Note:** Although it provides soothing relief, try to limit licorice tea intake to about 3 cups a day as more than that may loosen stools. Cardiac patients and those suffering from kidney problems and hypertension are advised against the intake of licorice.
   b. Drink a nice cup of warm **ginger or sage tea** with some honey!
      Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) alleviates inflammation and infection while sage (*Salvia officinalis*) is actually known for treating pharyngitis. It is also widely known for reducing inflammation and safeguarding the mucous membranes lining the throat and mouth.
   c. For a scratchy throat, make a cup of **marshmallow root** (*Althea officinalis*) tea.
   d. Take a ‘shot’ of **horseradish** (*Armoracia lapathifoliai*). Mix a tablespoon of pure horseradish with a teaspoon each of honey and ground cloves in a glass of warm water. Sip this slowly...

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**Red Cayenne Pepper Drops**

1 oz vegetable glycerin
1 tbsp red cayenne pepper
Cotton swabs or eye-dropper

Mix both ingredients and let it stand for about 24 hours. Strain the mixture through a coffee filter and store in a sterilized glass bottle. Dip a cotton swab into the mixture and swab your throat or use the eye-dropper and administer directly onto the back of the throat where it is painful.
NOTE: It is important to increase your fluid intake but do avoid the following.

i. Thick milky drinks. They tend to cover your throat and produce mucus which makes you cough even more.

ii. Orange juice. The acid may burn your already sensitive and inflamed throat.

iii. Caffeine-containing liquids. They may have a counter-productive diuretic result.

2. **Buy a humidifier.** Breathing in dry air irritates the sensitive mucous membranes lining the back of the throat. If experiencing unnatural dry weather, supplement the humidifier with steam inhalations. Open your hot water tap and convert your bathroom into a makeshift sauna. Lock yourself in and breathe deeply for about 5 to 10 minutes.

3. **Throw your old toothbrush!** The bristles of your toothbrush serve as a ‘home’ to millions of germs and when you wound your gums while brushing, this serves as an invitation for the bacteria to enter your system. Replace your toothbrush after each recovery from any cold, flu or any other viral infection.

4. **REST!** Ensure that you get at least eight hours of sleep at night to give your body the opportunity to heal.

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**Danger Signs - When to Consult Your Doctor**

As mentioned, most sore throat cases are self-limited. However, there are certain conditions that warrant a closer inspection. In the instances below, sore throat is actually a symptom of a more serious condition rather than the effect of one.

Study the list. If you are experiencing any of the listed symptoms below for over 48 hours (2 days), seek medical care immediately.

1. Painful swallowing is an ordinary affliction associated with sore throats. However, as a general rule, seek medical care if you’re having trouble swallowing even liquids.

2. If you have a very bad case of sore throat and experience a sudden surge of a rash or fever (101°F or higher), this may be a sign of **strep throat**, an infection caused by the streptococcal bacteria. Please consult your doctor as this is a serious condition that should be treated with antibiotics. Untreated, it can lead to rheumatic fever and nephritis.

3. If you are experiencing a severe case of sore throat and extreme pain when swallowing, and have engaged recently in oral sex, this may be **pharyngeal gonorrhea**. See a doctor immediately as this disease is highly contagious. Furthermore, having gonorrhea in the throat is a good indication that you may be afflicted in other areas as well, such as the vagina and rectum.

4. Prolonged and recurring sore throats. This may actually be a symptom of an unidentified allergy. It could be an allergic reaction to pollen, milk, or some other problem.

5. Recurring sore throats that are worse in the morning and seem to disappear as the day progresses. This could be a form of hay fever.
6. If you have a very sore throat combined with redder-than-normal tonsils, swollen neck glands and bad breath, you may be suffering from tonsillitis.

7. If you have a sore throat accompanied by drooling and difficulty with breathing, this may be epiglottitis.

8. If you are experiencing joint pains, earache or a lump in the neck.

9. If you see blood in your saliva or phlegm.

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### An Ounce of Prevention

1. To **avoid pharyngeal gonorrhea**, encourage the use of a condom even during oral sex. A study conducted amongst female sex workers in Singapore by Drs. Wong, Chan and Koh indicate a decline in the incidence of pharyngeal gonorrhea with the promoted use of condoms.4

2. Sleep with your head 4 to 6 inches higher than your feet to avoid **gastric reflux**. Sleeping with your head and feet at an even level may cause stomach acids to 'rise' to your throat and irritate the throat issues. In trying to elevate your head, do NOT use more pillows but rather increase the incline of your bed frame by using bricks. Using pillows may actually aggravate the situation as it encourages your body to 'fold' in the middle which in turn will increase the pressure on your esophagus.5

3. At the first signs of a sore throat, **suck on a quarter of a lozenge** every 30 minutes.

4. **Change your toothbrush frequently.** It is recommended to replace it every month.

5. **Clean your hands** frequently and thoroughly, especially before eating. This lowers the chances of bacteria entering your mouth and settling on your throat. **How thorough?** It is said that one should sing the Happy Birthday song while washing one’s hands and stop only when the song is done. When in contact with people who are ill, wash more often than usual.

6. Take **ALL NATURAL** health drinks or supplements as part of your daily diet. One such popular brand that offers a variety of ALOE VERA-based drinks and health supplements is **Forever Living Products (FLP)**. They also offer high-quality honey and honey-bee supplements. Visit their Website – [www.foreverliving.com](http://www.foreverliving.com) – for more details.

7. Avoid heavy contact with people whom you know are currently sick.

8. If you’re smoking, avoid it. If you’re a non-smoker, avoid their smoke. Smoke irritates the throat and air passages and as such creates the perfect setting for infection to start.
Frequently Asked Questions about Sore Throats

1. Do zinc capsules work for a sore throat or is it only beneficial in the lozenge form?

Taking zinc capsules or tablets work BUT studies show that it works best if it’s taken in lozenge form. Further, sucking lozenges promote saliva production which is soothing to the throat.

2. How long will it take to go away?

If caused by a viral infection, recovery can be anywhere from one week (for common infections) to six weeks or more (for more serious conditions such as mononucleosis or mono).

3. Anything I can do to make it go away sooner?

Rest to allow the body to heal naturally and apply the easy-to-make home remedies in this report. And do try not to use your voice too much...

4. It hurts when I swallow, is it good to eat solids even if it hurts?

Although people suffering from sore throats generally find their appetite decreased - who wouldn’t if you can hardly swallow?!? – eating small amounts of solid food frequently is advised. If it is really painful, revert to soft, bland foods.

5. What causes a sore throat, and how do you get rid of them at home?

The most common cause is a viral infection. Please see Home Remedies 101 in this report for the best home cures.

6. How can you tell if a sore throat is from a common infection or from a sexually-transmitted disease (STD)?

The only way to know for sure is to consult a doctor who will perform a throat culture (Figure 2) and examine it under a microscope to determine (a) if indeed your sore throat is due to a bacterial infection and (b) what particular bacteria is causing it.

7. How do you get rid of the pus on your throat?

Gargling with a salt and water solution is by far the most common home remedy. Do note that the presence of pus on your throat is a symptom of a bacterial infection and as such may require antibiotic treatment.

Figure 2. In performing a throat culture, your doctor will swab out a sampling of throat mucus and subject this to a laboratory analysis.
8. Is it just me, or is your tongue tired when you talk after not being able to talk for several days?

If you’ve had a sore throat for a long period, then you MAY experience this simply as a result of the fact that you haven’t used your tongue in a while. HOWEVER, ensure that you are not afflicted with SORE TONGUE which is a different disease altogether.

9. Do the bacteria that cause the infection really go away or does it harbor itself in the mouth or throat?

The bacteria that caused the sore throat completely disappears.

10. What can I do to help prevent my throat from becoming sore?

Please see An Ounce of Prevention in this report.

11. Is there really a PRE sore throat? Where you feel like you’re going to get one?

For sore throats caused by viral infections, yes, as these types of sore throats are generally accompanied by classic colds and flu symptoms.

For sore throats caused by bacterial infections, no, this type of sore throat usually just hits you.
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