

MCLA Health Services

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Self Care Sheet

Sore Throat

A sore throat (or pharyngitis) is usually caused by a virus which can result in cold symptoms as well. Viral colds are contagious thus can spread from person to person through inhaling germs from an infected person's coughs or sneezes or by touching something that has their germs and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes.

The best way to treat a sore throat is to treat the symptoms. Antibiotics are not effective for sore throats caused by a virus, only for illnesses caused by a bacteria, like "Strep". Most sore throats will get better on their own.

What to do about a sore throat?

- ⇒ Gargle with warm salt water up to 4 times a day. (Use 1/4 tsp salt in 8 ounces of water).
- ⇒ Use over-the-counter throat lozenges.
- ⇒ Drink plenty of warm or cool liquids. Popsicles and frozen desserts help numb the throat.
- ⇒ Eat soft foods.
- ⇒ Take over-the-counter Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Motrin (ibuprofen) as directed to ease the discomfort.
- ⇒ Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of germs from person to person.

Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation and treatment. Reasons to be seen by a health care provider include a sore throat that does not get better or you develop a fever >100.0. You may need to be tested for strep if indicated. More serious sore throats requiring immediate medical care occur when you can not swallow or talk.