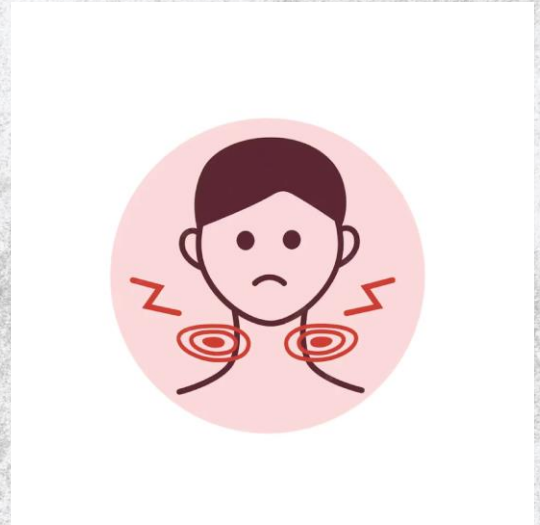
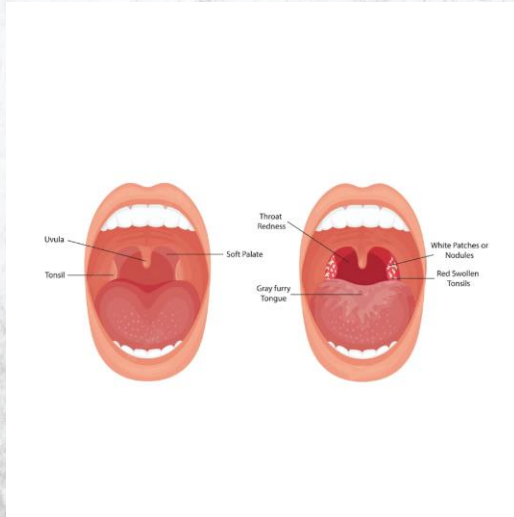


## What is Pharyngitis (sore throat)?



When your throat is irritated, inflamed, scratchy, painful, or very dry, it's called sore throat. Your throat can be sore from a bacterial or viral infection, allergies or irritants, acid reflux, vocal overuse and strain, or even sleeping with your mouth open for too long. The pain may be worse when you swallow.

## What causes sore throat?

Many conditions and factors cause sore throat, also called pharyngitis. You may feel pain and irritation anywhere in the back of your mouth, on your tonsils, and down your neck. You may also have a fever, swollen lymph nodes in your neck, and a headache or earache.





Common causes of a sore throat include:

- **Viral infection:** Most often, sore throats happen as a result of a viral infection, such as the flu or the common cold. symptoms typically go away on their own within a week to 10 days. Some viruses cause symptoms for a few months. Antibiotic medications do not work on viruses.
- **Tonsillitis:** Tonsils are the two small lumps of soft tissue at the back of your throat. They trap the germs that make you sick. Tonsillitis occurs when your tonsils become infected and inflamed. Bacteria and viruses can cause tonsillitis.
- **Bacterial infection:** Symptoms include fever and red, swollen tonsils. Your doctor can prescribe antibiotics to treat bacterial sore throat.
- **Allergies:** Allergies to pollen, dust mites, pets, or mold can make your throat dry and scratchy. Sore throat from allergies results from postnasal drip (when mucus from your nose drips down the back of your throat). The mucus irritates your throat and causes pain.
- **Acid reflux:** People with a condition called gastroesophageal reflux disease feel burning and pain in their throat. This pain, called heartburn, happens when acid from the stomach backs up into the esophagus. The esophagus is the tube that carries food from your throat to your stomach.
- **Overuse or irritants:** Yelling, screaming, singing without proper form, or talking too much without resting can lead to a sore throat. Spicy foods, smoking, and hot liquids can burn or irritate your throat.
- **Excessive dryness:** If you sleep with your mouth open at night, you may wake up with a sore throat.





## When should I call my doctor about my sore throat?

Most of the time, a sore throat isn't a sign of a serious condition. You should call your doctor if your sore throat lasts longer than a few days. Your doctor will determine what is causing your symptoms.

See your doctor right away if you also have:

- Trouble breathing or swallowing.
- A visible bulge in the back of the throat.
- Excessive drooling (in young children).
- Blood in saliva or phlegm.
- Severe throat pain.
- Extreme tiredness.
- Fever.
- Headache.
- Stomach ache, nausea/vomiting (usually in children).
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Rash anywhere on your body.





## How can I ease sore throat pain?

Treatment for a sore throat depends on the cause. Some general tips to relieve sore throat discomfort include:

- Drink warm fluids, such as hot tea with lemon or broth.
- Increase the total amount of fluids you drink. This keeps you hydrated and prevents your throat from getting dry.
- If you are an adult, keep your throat moist with throat lozenges, ice chips, or hard candies. Do not give lozenges or hard candies to children under two years of age. They are a choking hazard. Instead, give your child a popsicle.
- Use a numbing throat spray or cold liquids to reduce pain.
- Use a humidifier or vaporizer to add moisture to rooms you spend time in, especially your bedroom when you are sleeping.
- Get plenty of rest -- at least 8 hours of sleep a night.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about possible over-the-counter medicines to try. Never give aspirin to children because it can cause Reye's syndrome. Do not give cough or cold medicines to children under four years of age unless your doctor tells you to.

