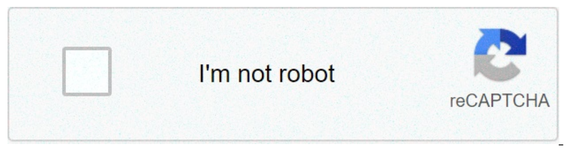


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# Streptococcal infection treatment

WE'RE ALL INFECTED. If not with coronavirus, or another illness, then with busy and ingratitude. Yes, those are viruses, too. Busy is a virus, and so is ingratitude, and before coronavirus presented in the U.S., many of us were suffering from both. Living each jam-packed day just trying to get to and through the next task. Living each jam-packed day under-appreciating the living and non-living blessings that surround us. This coronavirus is terrifying. It's bringing tragedy and causing fear. But -- and I make this remark with extreme hesitation because of my disgust and yes, hate, for what coronavirus has done to countries, people, families, businesses and the like -- it has done one constructive thing; it has forced many of us to reevaluate our lives, the kind of home we are keeping, how we are loving those inside it, how we are being there for our fellow neighbors outside of it, how we are balancing work and family life, and prioritizing what really matters when life is uncertain and not guaranteed. I have spent more time being present, really, truly, fully, all eyes and ears on deck kind of present with my kids, in the past week, than I probably have since they were newborns. I have been more understanding of my spouse. I have held fewer expectations for all of us, myself included, and for the minutes and hours that make up our day. I have cuddled with my senior-aged pets more. I have been praying more for others. I've been calling my grandparents a lot. I've been talking more to my dad in heaven, and I've continued to text constantly with my mom, because let's be real, she's always been my everyday person. I have changed my go-go-go lifestyle with the health of others in mind. I have begun to rely more on my own positive thoughts and self-talk to bring me the kind of joy extrinsic things and activities once would. The coronavirus SUCKS. I'm not even partially contending that there's any way it doesn't. I wish it never showed it's ugly face, and I wish it would go away, like now. BUT, because of it, I have pretty spontaneously and rapidly taken stock of my life; how I'm living it, who I'm living it with and for, how I can live it better, and how I can help even just one person do the same. It's not a silver lining because I refuse to call it that. I will not associate anything positive with this goddamn pandemic. But it is a realization, an awareness that if this or any virus doesn't kill us, our propensity towards busy and ingratitude will. Take stock of your life and your time, and what is left of both, as doing such is by far the best vaccine against mindless preoccupation with the less than important and under-valuing the really important. This post comes from the TODAY Parenting Team community, where all members are welcome to post and discuss parenting solutions. Learn more and join us! Because we're all in this together. An infection happens when your body's immune system is unable to fight off bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens. A pathogen, commonly called a germ, causes illness. Your immune system is your body's way of fighting pathogens. It is a process that involves cells, organs, and proteins. When your immune system is working properly, white blood cells destroy harmful germs. When it is weak, your white blood cells have a harder time fighting infection. Cancer and its treatment can make your immune system weaker and lower your level of certain white blood cells. If you have cancer and are currently in treatment for cancer, you are more likely to get infections. Infections are treatable, but they can be serious and life-threatening. Talk with your health care team if you experience signs of an infection or changes in your symptoms. What are the signs of an infection? You can get an infection almost anywhere in your body. Some common places include your mouth, skin, and lungs. Infections can also be common in the urinary tract, the rectum, and the genitals. Signs of an infection include: Fever – Body temperature of 100.5°F (38°C) or higher Chills or sweating Mouth, throat sores, or a toothache Abdominal (belly) pain Pain near the anus – you may also have sores or diarrhea Pain or burning when you urinate or having to urinate often A cough or difficulty breathing normally Redness, swelling, or pain, especially around a cut or where you had surgery or a catheter Itching in the vagina, sometimes with a discharge Doctors can treat infections. But they can be serious, and some can even cause death. Getting treatment right away is important. Treating infections is an important part of cancer care. Treatment for side effects of cancer or treatment is called palliative care or supportive care. Talk with your health care team if you think you might have an infection. What are the risk factors for getting an infection? Certain things make your immune system weaker. They include things from everyday life, such as stress, sleep problems, and not eating well. Some cancer treatments also raise your risk of getting infections. These include: Chemotherapy and other cancer medicines Radiation therapy to large areas of the body, including the pelvis, legs, chest, or belly Surgery Bone marrow/stem cell transplantation Certain cancers, cancer stages, and health conditions can also raise your risk. These include: Cancers that affect the bone marrow, such as leukemia and lymphoma Cancers that have spread to the bone Other health conditions, such as diabetes, kidney disease, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, liver disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD How is an infection treated? Your doctor might prescribe antibiotics or other medications if your cancer treatment raises your infection risk. Sometimes these medications are given to prevent infections. You may receive medication after you have signs and symptoms of an infection. If your level of certain white blood cells called neutrophils goes too low and you have a fever, you may need to stay in the hospital. A too-low level of neutrophils is called neutropenia. If you have a high risk of neutropenia and a fever, your doctor may prescribe medications called white blood cell growth factors. They help your body make more white blood cells. This lowers your risk of getting an infection. Learn more about ASCO's recommendations for white blood cell growth factors. How can infection be prevented? You can do many things to help prevent infections. You can: Wash your hands well and often, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. You can also use hand sanitizers. Take a shower or bath every day. Use lotion to prevent dry and cracked skin. Use gloves when you garden or do housework, especially while cleaning. Wash fruits and vegetables well. Learn more about food safety. Clean your teeth and gums with a soft toothbrush. Use mouthwash to prevent infections if your doctor or dentist recommends it. Learn more about dental health during cancer treatment. Get a flu shot each fall. You can also avoid things that might lead to an infection. Avoid: Being near sick people. Using someone else's cup, eating utensil, or toothbrush, or sharing food or makeup. Eating raw meat, seafood, and eggs. Using scissors, knives, and other sharp objects. If you must use them, be very careful. To avoid cuts, consider using an electric shaver and a blunt nail file instead of nail clippers. Handling cat litter and other animal waste. Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team About Infections Am I at an increased risk of infection? If so, for how long? Are there things I can do to help prevent infections? What are the signs or symptoms of an infection I should watch for? If I think I have an infection, how soon should I let you know? Related Resources When to Call the Doctor During Cancer Treatment Side Effects of Chemotherapy Side Effects of Immunotherapy Side Effects of Radiation Therapy Side Effects of Surgery Side Effects of Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplantation More Information National Cancer Institute: Infection and Neutropenia during Cancer Treatment Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Preventing Infections in Cancer Patients If strep throat is detected, it must be treated adequately with antibiotics. Streptococcus is highly responsive to penicillin and the cephalosporin antibiotics. Penicillin is effective, reliable, and inexpensive. Other penicillin derivatives such as amoxicillin, amoxicillin-clavulanate, cloxacillin, and dicloxacillin are all treatments that can get rid of strep throat. Note: It is important to take the full course of antibiotics as prescribed, even if the symptoms resolve. Prematurely discontinuing antibiotics can result in the infection being inadequately treated, with potentially adverse consequences or relapse of the infection. Ordinarily, pharyngeal GABHS infections, including scarlet fever, are self-limited. Antibiotics shorten the course in young children, especially those with scarlet fever, but have only modest effect on symptoms in adolescents and adults. However, antibiotics help prevent local suppurative complications (eg, peritonsillar abscess), otitis media, and rheumatic fever. Penicillin is the drug of choice for pharyngeal GABHS infections. No isolate of GABHS has shown penicillin resistance clinically. However, some streptococcal strains appear to have in vitro tolerance to penicillin (ie, significantly decreased bactericidal effect of penicillin); the clinical significance of such strains is unclear. A single injection of benzathine penicillin G 600,000 units IM for small children (< 27 kg) or 1.2 million units IM for children weighing ≥ 27 kg, adolescents, and adults usually suffices. Oral drugs may be used if the patient can be trusted to maintain the regimen for the required 10 days. Choices include Penicillin V 500 mg (250 mg for children < 27 kg) orally every 12 hours Amoxicillin 50 mg/kg (maximum 1 g) once a day for 10 days (which is an effective substitute for penicillin V) Oral narrow-spectrum cephalosporins (eg, cephalexin, cefadroxil) are also effective and can be used unless patients have an anaphylactic reaction to penicillin. Azithromycin can be used for a 5-day course of therapy, although macrolides are inactive against Fusobacterium necrophorum, a common cause of pharyngitis in adolescents and adults. Delaying treatment 1 to 2 days until laboratory confirmation increases neither the duration of disease nor the incidence of complications. When penicillin and a beta-lactam are contraindicated, choices include Clindamycin 600 mg (6.7 mg/kg for children) orally every 8 hours Erythromycin or clarithromycin 250 mg (7.5 mg/kg for children) orally every 12 hours for 10 days Azithromycin 500 mg (15 mg/kg for children) once a day for 5 days Because resistance of GABHS to macrolides has been detected, some authorities recommend in vitro confirmation of susceptibility if a macrolide is to be used and there is macrolide resistance in the community. Clindamycin 6.7 mg/kg orally every 8 hours is preferred in children who have relapses of chronic tonsillitis, possibly because of the following: Clindamycin has good activity against penicillinase-producing staphylococci or anaerobes coinfecting the tonsillar crypts and inactivating penicillin G. It appears to halt exotoxin production more rapidly than other drugs. Amoxicillin/clavulanate is also effective. Trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole (TMP/SMX), some of the fluoroquinolones, and tetracyclines are unreliable for treating GABHS infection. Sore throat, headache, and fever can be treated with analgesics or antipyretics. Aspirin should be avoided in children. Bed rest and isolation are unnecessary. Close contacts who are symptomatic or have a history of poststreptococcal complications should be examined for streptococci. Streptococcus (simply called strep) is a common group of bacteria. Different types of strep cause different diseases. Most often they cause sore throat (strep throat) or skin infections. But they can cause life-threatening infections in other parts of your body. Streptococcus bacteria can live in and on your body without causing symptoms Infection can happen in your throat, middle ear, sinuses, lungs, skin, tissue under your skin, heart valves, and blood Infections can cause red and painful swollen tissues, scabby sores, sore throat, and a rash Doctors treat streptococcal infections with antibiotics Streptococcus bacteria can spread from person to person by: Breathing in infected droplets from someone's sneeze or cough Touching an infected sore Giving birth, where it can spread from mother to baby You have different symptoms depending on where you have the infection: Throat infection (strep throat): Sore throat, swollen lumps in your neck, fever, pus on your tonsils Skin infection: A painful red area on your skin (cellulitis), or yellow, crusty sores (impetigo) Infection under your skin (necrotizing fasciitis): Chills, fever, and severe pain and tenderness in the part of your body that's infected Necrotizing fasciitis is very serious. You could get gangrene and lose an arm or leg or even die. Rheumatic fever gives you painful, swollen joints. Children with rheumatic fever may have uncontrollable, jerky movements of their arms and legs. Rheumatic fever sometimes damages the heart's valves. But heart valve damage usually doesn't show up for many years. Scarlet fever gives you a rash on your face, then the rest of your body. The rash feels like sandpaper. When it fades, your skin peels. Your tongue gets red bumps, so it looks like a strawberry (called strawberry tongue). Doctors will test a swab from your sore throat or other infected tissue. Doctors treat streptococcal infections with antibiotics. For necrotizing fasciitis, you'll be admitted to the hospital and have surgery to take out the dead, infected tissue. NOTE: This is the Consumer Version. DOCTORS: Click here for the Professional Version Click here for the Professional Version Although it's most commonly associated with vaginal infection, yeast infections can also occur in the mouth, esophagus, skin and bloodstream. The treatment of a yeast infection depends on where the infection is located. Read on to learn more about yeast infections and their treatments. Yeast infections are a fungal infection caused by candida, which is the scientific name for yeast. As MedlinePlus points out, this fungus naturally lives just about everywhere, including the human body. When you're healthy, your immune system is typically able to keep the candida levels controlled. But when you're sick or on antibiotics, the candida can multiply rapidly , causing infection scientifically called candidiasis. This infection can affect your mouth, throat, esophagus, skin and genitals. It can also take on a serious form that enters your bloodstream. You normally have yeast living in your digestive tract. However, certain risk factors can increase the odds that you'll develop a yeast infection in your mouth or throat, known as thrush, or in your esophagus. Risk factors include wearing dentures, taking antibiotics, having conditions or taking medicine that causes dry mouth, smoking, diabetes, cancer and HIV/AIDS. Symptoms include: Having white patches inside your mouth and throat Diminished taste Soreness, redness and discomfort Redness and cracking at the corners of your mouth Treatment for this type of yeast infection includes using an antifungal medicine applied inside the mouth, according to the CDC. For severe yeast infections, you might be given an antifungal drug like fluconazole to swallow or through an IV. If you saw your skin under a microscope, you'd be amazed at the bacteria and fungi that live there, including yeast. A yeast infection on the skin can happen anywhere, but most commonly in moist, warm areas like the groin and armpits. Most diaper rashes are also a yeast infection, according to MedlinePlus. Symptoms of a yeast infection on the skin include: A red rash that grows and spreads A rash occurring under the breasts, in skin folds and near genitals and buttocks Infected hair follicles that look similar to pimples To treat this type of yeast infection, your doctor will likely recommend keeping your skin clean, dry and exposed to air. This is one of the greatest skin yeast infection cures. Your doctor may also recommend or prescribe topical antifungal creams or ointments to apply to the affected area. When yeast grows in or around the genitals, it can cause significant discomfort. Common symptoms include: Itching and soreness Pain while urinating Pain during intercourse Abnormal discharge In most cases, your doctor will recommend an antifungal treatment that you apply inside the vagina. Patients with a severe infection may require a round of oral medication, which include fluconazole according to the CDC. Unlike other types of yeast infections, invasive candidiasis can affect your organs, including your brain, heart and eyes, along with your bloodstream. Risk factors include being in the intensive care unit of the hospital, having a weakened immune system and having kidney failure. In many cases, doctors test for this in patients with fever and chills that haven't improved after taking antibiotics. Treatment varies depending on how severe the infection is, your age and your immune status. In many cases, the first recommendation is an IV antifungal treatment with medications like micafungin or caspofungin, according to the CDC. Treatment typically lasts for about two weeks after symptoms disappear.