



Scarborough College

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF A SORE THROAT PROTOCOL

Sore throats are common either alone or as part of other illnesses such as colds.

They may be caused by either viruses or bacteria, and usually resolve themselves in between 3-4 days.

Symptoms:

- Pain either alone or on swallowing.
- Associated symptoms such as headache.
- Younger children may complain of stomach ache and may vomit

Examination:

- Take history.
- Examine throat with pen torch and tongue depressor if able. NB white patches at back of throat are not necessarily indicative of bacterial infection.
- Check for pyrexia.
- Other symptoms such as cough and cold.

Caution

Care should be taken if the pupil has a weakened immune system or is not responding to treatment.

Call 999/Seek Urgent Care if:

- Pupil has difficulty breathing or swallowing or is drooling.
- Has severe pain.
- Is making a high pitched noise on breathing (stridor).

Treatment:

- Paracetamol. Steam inhalation not recommended. (BMJ 2014).
- Offer plenty of warm or cool fluids.
- Suck lozenges, hard sweets, ice cubes or ice lollies
- Seek medical advice if temperature and pain doesn't resolve within 3 -4 days.

[Antibiotics](#) aren't usually prescribed for a sore throat, even if it's caused by a bacterial infection, as they're unlikely to make you feel better any quicker and they can have unpleasant side effects.

Medication of choice is oral paracetamol tablets/suspension, kept as a stock item. Dose as follows:

Paracetamol Suspension 120mg/5ml		
2 – 4 years	7.5ml	Maximum 4 doses in 24 hours
4 – 6 years	10ml	Maximum 4 doses in 24 hours

Paracetamol Suspension 250mg/5ml			
6 – 8 years	5ml	4 times in 24 hours	
8 -10 years	7.5ml	4 times in 24 hours	
10 – 12 years	10ml	4 times in 24 hours	

Allow at least 4 hours between doses.

Do not give for more than 3 consecutive days without speaking to doctor or pharmacist.

Paracetamol tablets 500mgs, or Soluble paracetamol 500mgs		
12 – 16 years	500mg – 750mg	(one to one and half tablets)
16 years and adults	500 mg – 1 gram	(one to two tablets)

References

bestpractice.bmj.com/best-practice/evidence 4 March 2014.
NHS choices 15 May 2017

Protocol Last Reviewed – September 2019