### Tonsillitis

Tonsillitis is inflammation of the tonsils.

There are two tonsils, situated on either side of the back of the throat and they form part of the body's immune system.

**Causes of Tonsillitis**

Tonsillitis can be caused by a virus, such as the common cold, or by a bacterial infection,

Among the bacteria that cause sore throats, the streptococcus group A is the most common

**Incubation period:** is two to four days – sometimes it can be less

**People at risk:**

It can occur at any age but children come into close contact with others at school and play, exposing them to a variety of viruses and bacteria.

### What are the signs and symptoms of tonsillitis?

* Pain in the throat that may last more than 48 hours.
* Difficulty in swallowing.
* The pain may spread to the ears.
* The throat is reddened, the tonsils are swollen and may be coated or have white spots on them.
* Possibly a high temperature.
* Swollen lymph glands under the jaw and in the neck.
* [Headache](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/headache.htm).
* Loss of voice or changes in the voice.
* **How Tonsillitis Is Diagnosed**
* Diagnosis is based on a physical examination
* Throat culture.

### What complications may arise?

Usually a throat infection, such as tonsillitis, causes no trouble and only lasts about a week.

**But the following complications can arise.**

* A secondary infection may occur in the [middle ear](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/glueear.htm) or [sinuses](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/sinusitis.htm).
* If the sore throat is due to a streptococcus infection, there may be a rash ([scarlet fever](http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/diseases/facts/scarletfever.htm)).
* An uncommon complication is a throat abscess that occurs usually only on one side. If sufficiently large this can need surgical drainage
* In very rare cases, diseases like rheumatic fever or a particular kidney disease (glomerulonephritis) can occur. This is much less commonly observed now than it was several decades ago.

**Treatment for Tonsillitis**

A mild case of tonsillitis does not necessarily require treatment, particularly if it is caused by a virus, such as a cold.

Treatments for more severe cases of tonsillitis may include:

* Drink plenty of fluids.
* Get lots of rest.
* Gargle with warm salt water several times a day.
* Use throat lozenges.
* Use a humidifier to moisten the air in your home.
* Avoid smoke.
* Use over-the-counter pain medications, such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen. (Aspirin can be dangerous for children. Always check with your doctor before giving aspirin to children.)
* **Antibiotics:**Antibiotics will be prescribed to fight a bacterial infection. It is important that you complete the full course of antibiotics for 7-10 days.
* **Tonsillectomy:** Surgery to remove the tonsils is called a tonsillectomy. is only recommended for people who experience repeated tonsillitis, tonsillitis that does not respond to other treatment, or tonsillitis that causes complications.