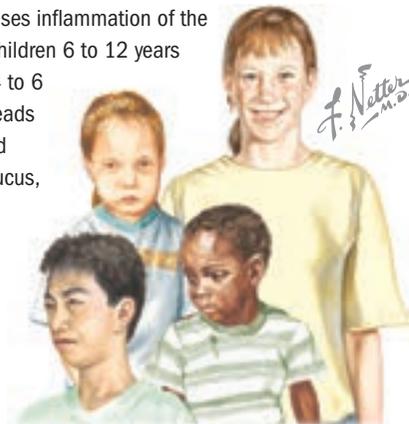


CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH TONSILLITIS

Tonsillitis is infection that causes inflammation of the tonsils. It's very common in children 6 to 12 years old. Most recover quickly, in 4 to 6 days. It's contagious and spreads by direct contact with infected secretions, such as saliva, mucus, and tears.



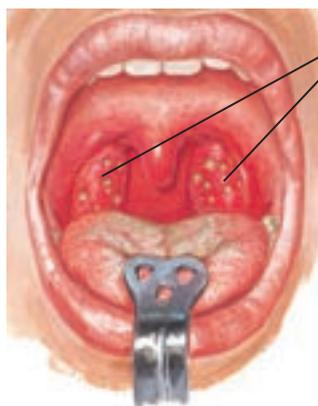
What Is Tonsillitis?

Tonsillitis is infection that causes inflammation (swelling and redness) of the tonsils. Tonsils are clumps of tissue, one on each side of the throat, that trap bacteria and viruses.

Tonsillitis is very common in children 6 to 12 years old. Most children recover quickly. The disease usually lasts 4 to 6 days. Tonsillitis is contagious and spreads by direct contact with infected secretions, such as saliva, mucus, and tears.

What Causes Tonsillitis?

The cause is often a virus, but bacteria can also cause tonsillitis. Tonsillitis caused by bacteria is called strep throat when it is caused by *Streptococcus* bacteria.



Tonsils are clumps of tissue, one on each side of the throat, that trap bacteria and viruses. Tonsillitis is often caused by a virus, but bacteria can cause it. Tonsils may have a yellow or thin white coating or small white patches.

What Are the Symptoms of Tonsillitis?

Symptoms include a sore throat, pain and trouble swallowing, drooling, fever, earache, tender swollen glands in the neck, and tonsils that look swollen and red. Tonsils may have a yellow or thin white coating or small white patches. Some children have a hard time breathing because of very large tonsils.

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Your child's health care provider will diagnose tonsillitis by doing a throat examination. The health care provider may use a swab to get a sample from the throat to test for strep bacteria.

How Is Tonsillitis Diagnosed?

The health care provider will diagnose tonsillitis by examining the throat. The health care provider may use a swab to get a sample from the throat to test for strep bacteria. The health care provider may also do blood tests if other infections such as mononucleosis are suspected.

Your child should get plenty of rest and limit activities. The health care provider will prescribe antibiotics if bacteria are the cause, but not if viruses are.



Have your child drink plenty of fluids, especially warm liquids.



Don't allow smoking near your child.



Don't give aspirin to children younger than 16. They can get a serious illness called Reye's syndrome. Give acetaminophen instead.



To help prevent spreading the infection, everyone in the household should wash hands regularly. Avoid eating or drinking from the same utensils.

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How Is Tonsillitis Treated?

Rest and good fluid intake are the best treatment. If bacteria are the cause, the health care provider will prescribe antibiotics. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen can be used for pain and fever. Gargling with a saltwater solution or other soothing liquid may help pain and irritation. A cool mist vaporizer may also help the cough and irritation.

For some children, the health care provider may suggest removing the tonsils (tonsillectomy). This surgery is usually done for frequent or long-lasting tonsillitis that causes breathing problems.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Tonsillitis:

- ✓ **DO** make sure that your child drinks plenty of fluids, especially warm liquids.
- ✓ **DO** have your child gargle with warm saltwater.
- ✓ **DO** give your child over-the-counter pills or liquids, such as acetaminophen, for pain and fever.
- ✓ **DO** make sure that your child takes all the antibiotics.
- ✓ **DO** practice good hygiene to avoid spreading the infection to other family members. Don't let your child eat or drink from the same utensils as other family members.
- ✓ **DO** let your child increase activity slowly after fever has been gone for 2 to 3 days.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if your child has severe swelling of the tonsils and has trouble breathing.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if your child's fever is gone for a few days and suddenly returns.
- ✓ **DO** call your health care provider if your child gets new symptoms, such as a rash, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, shortness of breath, or cough with thick or discolored sputum.
- ⊗ **DON'T** give aspirin to children younger than 16. They can get a serious illness called Reye's syndrome.
- ⊗ **DON'T** smoke or let people smoke around your child. Smoking can worsen the infection and delay recovery.
- ⊗ **DON'T** let your child stop taking antibiotics until they're all gone.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- Infectious Diseases Society of America
Tel: (703) 299-0200
Website: <http://www.idsociety.org/>
- The American Academy of Pediatrics
Tel: (847) 434-4000
Website: <http://www.aap.org>