

Sore Throat Red Flags and Strep Check Card

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1. Emergency now: call emergency services or go to the ER

- ☐ Difficulty breathing, swallowing, speaking or opening the mouth
- ☐ Swelling inside the mouth or throat, or severe pain that is quickly getting worse
- ☐ Excessive drooling in a young child Do not drive yourself. Ask someone else or call for help.

2. Virus or strep? Clues only. A test decides.

Points toward a virus	Points toward strep (get tested)
Cough, runny nose, hoarse voice, pink eye	Sudden pain, fever, no cough
Comes with a cold or flu	Red, swollen tonsils, white patches or pus
Gradual start	Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth; swollen front neck glands
Antibiotics will not help	Most common at ages 5 to 15; may come with a rash (scarlet fever)

3. See a doctor promptly if

- ☐ Fever with no cough, especially a child aged 5 to 15
- ☐ White patches or pus on the tonsils
- ☐ Too painful to eat or drink, or signs of dehydration
- ☐ Blood in saliva or phlegm
- ☐ A rash, or joint swelling and pain
- ☐ No better in a few days (a week for tonsillitis)
- ☐ Keeps coming back
- ☐ Baby under 3 months with 100.4°F (38°C) or higher

4. Comfort care age rules

No aspirin for children (NHS: under 16). Under 6 months: acetaminophen (paracetamol) only. No lozenges under 4. Young children should not gargle. Fluids, ice chips or popsicles, and a clean humidifier help at any age. On antibiotics for strep? About 12 hours after the first dose, contagiousness drops. Finish the full course.

5. 7-day symptom log

Day	Date	Pain (0-10)	Fever?	Cough?	Eating and drinking OK?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

Evidence for homeopathy in tonsillitis is low certainty (Perry et al., 2026), and the scientific consensus is that homeopathy has no reliable effect (NHMRC 2015; NCCIH). This card contains no remedies or doses.