

## General Advice on Managing Sore Throats (from NHS Direct Wales)

Sore throats are very common and usually nothing to worry about. They normally get better within 7 to 10 days.

Most sore throats are caused by minor illnesses such as colds or flu and can be treated at home.



### Self Care – looking after yourself at home

- take ibuprofen or paracetamol – paracetamol is better for children and for people who can't take ibuprofen (note that children under 16 should never take aspirin)
- drink plenty of cool or warm fluids, and avoid very hot drinks
- eat cool, soft foods
- avoid smoking and smoky places
- gargle with a homemade mouthwash of warm, salty water
- try sucking lozenges, hard sweets, ice cubes or ice lollies – but don't give young children anything small and hard to suck because of the risk of choking

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.

As most sore throats get better on their own, you don't usually need to get advice from a healthcare professional, but it's a good idea to seek advice if:

### Your Symptoms

- your sore throat is severe
- you have a persistent sore throat that hasn't started to improve after a week
- You are unsure about your symptoms and how best to treat them

### Which NHS Service?



Visit your local  
Pharmacy

- you experience severe sore throats frequently
- you have a weak immune system – for example, you have HIV, are having chemotherapy, or are taking medication that suppresses your immune system



Contact your  
GP