

TONSILLITIS (AN INFECTION OF THE TONSILS)

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Nowadays because of many reasons (air pollution, bad nourishment, stresses, viruses, etc.) people's immune system is weak, it causes a lot of diseases. One of the most popular type of diseases is respiratory diseases (bronchitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis, tonsillitis).

AIM: learn through the notion of "tonsillitis", its symptoms and causes of appearing, its types and ways of treatment and prevention of tonsillitis.

METHODS & MATERIALS: Tonsillitis is an infection of the tonsils and will often, but not necessarily, cause a sore throat and fever.

There are 3 main types of tonsillitis: acute, subacute and chronic. Acute tonsillitis can either be bacterial or viral in origin. Subacute tonsillitis (which can last between 3 weeks and 3 months) is caused by the bacterium Actinomyces. Chronic tonsillitis, which can last for long periods if not treated, is almost always bacterial.

The tonsils are lumps of tissue located on either side of the back of the throat. They are part of the body's immune system, designed to protect us by trapping bacteria and viruses that try to enter the body through the mouth.

But sometimes infections are too much for the tonsils to handle, and these fighters of infection become infected themselves. When that happens, it's called tonsillitis.

Tonsillitis is usually caused by the same viruses that cause the common cold. It also can be caused by certain types of bacteria. For example, you've probably heard of strep throat. It's an infection in your throat or tonsils caused by a specific type of bacteria called group A *streptococci*

What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

If you have healthy tonsils, you probably don't even notice them — even if you look at the back of your throat in a mirror. The tonsils become a lot easier to see when someone has tonsillitis because they swell up and become red. Here are some of the signs of tonsillitis:

- sore throat, which can be mild to severe
- swelling of the tonsils
- swelling of the lymph nodes (glands) in your neck
- redness in the tonsils
- white spots or pus on the tonsils
- changes in your voice
- fever

- difficulty swallowing

If you have symptoms of tonsillitis, it's a good idea to visit your doctor.

What Do Doctors Do?

Your doctor will ask about your symptoms and examine your throat and neck. If your doctor thinks you have tonsillitis, he or she may use a soft swab to gently collect a sample from your tonsils and the back of your throat. The sample is then tested to see if strep bacteria are present. The test is quick and easy and it will tell you and your doctor whether you will need medication to get better.

If the test shows that bacteria caused your sore throat, your doctor will usually prescribe an antibiotic to kill the bacteria. Not only will this help you feel better, it will also help prevent complications of untreated strep throat. (When strep throat isn't treated properly with antibiotics, people can develop serious complications, such as kidney disease.)

If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, be sure to follow the directions carefully. You'll need to finish taking all the medicine even if your symptoms go away and you feel better. That will prevent the infection from flaring up again and help protect you against any complications.

If a strep test comes back negative, it's probably a virus causing the tonsillitis. If this is the case, antibiotics won't help. Just like with a cold (also caused by a virus), you'll have to take it easy for several days and let the virus run its course.

If you have frequent episodes of tonsillitis, your doctor or an **otolaryngologist**, (a doctor who specializes in ear, nose, and throat problems) may recommend a tonsillectomy. This is a surgical procedure to remove the tonsils. Tonsillectomy may also be recommended if the infection is not responding to antibiotics.

How Can I Prevent Tonsillitis?

Tonsillitis is contagious. This means you can get it from someone else who has it. Sneezing and coughing can pass the tonsillitis-causing virus or bacteria from one person to the next. But you can protect yourself from catching tonsillitis or passing it to somebody else: wash your hands frequently; if someone in your household or your friend has tonsillitis, don't use that person's cups, silverware, toothbrush, or other utensils; & if you have tonsillitis, keep your stuff separate & don't share it with anyone; don't kiss your boyfriend or girlfriend until you're completely over the tonsillitis; once you've recovered, throw out your toothbrush & buy a new one. That way you won't reinfect yourself.