

## Sore throat: antibiotics or not?

Use this **Option Grid™** decision aid to help you and your healthcare professional talk about how to best treat your sore throat.

The likelihood of having a bacterial infection increases if you have pus on the tonsils, tender neck glands, a fever, and do not have a cough. If you have 3 or more of these 4 symptoms (pus, tender neck, fever, no cough), it is moderately likely that you have a bacterial infection. If you have 2 or fewer of these issues, it is unlikely that you have a bacterial infection.

Frequently Asked Questions ↓	Treatment with antibiotics	Treatment without antibiotics
<b>It is moderately likely that my sore throat is bacterial. Will I get better faster with this treatment?</b>	Roughly 50 in every 100 people (50%) who take antibiotics will feel better about 1 day earlier than they would without antibiotics. They may not feel better for the first day or two. Roughly 50 in every 100 people (50%) will not benefit.	No, the symptoms are usually a problem for about 3-7 days.
<b>It is unlikely that my sore throat is bacterial. Will I get better faster with this treatment?</b>	Roughly 20 in every 100 people (20%) will feel better about 1 day earlier than they would without antibiotics. Roughly 80 in every 100 people (80%) will not benefit.	No, the symptoms are usually a problem for about 3-7 days.
<b>What does this treatment consist of?</b>	Taking antibiotics, as well as taking over-the-counter pain relievers, drinking fluids, eating ice cubes or other cold foods.	Taking over-the-counter pain relievers, drinking fluids, eating ice cubes or other cold foods.
<b>What problems might this treatment cause?</b>	About 16 in every 100 people (16%) will have one or more of the following problems: upset stomach, rash, or diarrhea. Using antibiotics can lead to bacteria becoming resistant to the treatment.	You avoid any problems antibiotics might cause.
<b>Will this treatment lower my chance of having other infections?</b>	Depending on the type of infection you have, you are slightly less likely to develop an ear or sinus infection.	No

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**Evidence document:** <http://optiongrid.org/admin/resources/grid/evidences/46.pdf?x=D8mKFTkR3>

**Publication date:** 2015-05-27 **Expiry date:** 2016-07-14 **ISBN:** 978-0-9575461-6-5 **License:** CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 (International)

Download the most current version from: <http://optiongrid.org/option-grids/grid-landing/46>

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