Sore Throat  (Tonsillitis)

Tonsils are lymph glands located on either side of the throat. Their function is to produce white blood cells to fight bacteria and/or viruses that come into contact with the throat and sinuses.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Pain and/or soreness in the throat, especially with swallowing
- The lymph nodes on either side of and/or in the back of the neck may swell and be tender
- Pain from the throat may be referred into the middle ear causing earaches
- The throat and tonsils may look swollen and red. The tonsils may also have a pus-like coating or collection of white debris in the craters of the swollen tonsils (white spots)
- Fever may or may not be present
- Head congestion, cough, runny nose may be present, depending on the causative agent

**Important Point:** If your sore throat is accompanied by one or more of the following, you should be evaluated by a health care provider: significant pain, sudden onset, fever of 100 degrees or greater, general feeling of illness, a generalized body rash, bad breath.

Self Care Treatment:

- Take an over the counter pain reliever/fever reducer as needed (Tylenol/acetaminophen 325 mg tabs – take 2 every 4 – 6 hours) and according to the label directions.
- Drink plenty of liquids to remain hydrated which will keep your fever down and thin out mucus.
- Gargle with a warm salt water mixture (1/4 teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water) every 2 hours to soothe soreness and help clear debris from the throat and tonsils.
- Dissolving ice chips or ice pops in your mouth will soothe the throat and provide fluid intake. Or, you may find sipping on warm liquids, such as tea, more soothing.

To Diagnose Strep Throat:

A Rapid Strep test can be done at the Health Center for a small fee ($5.00) or the Health Center provider can perform a strep culture which is sent to the Bloomsburg Hospital and billed to your health insurance by the hospital laboratory (Approximately $150.00).

Developed June 2003
Reviewed January 2012, January 2015, January 2016, January 2017
Revised January 2012, January 2017
Self Care for Sore Throat