Sore Throat

A sore throat is most often (85-90% of the time) caused by a virus. Sore throats due to a virus are self-limited with symptoms typically lasting 5-6 days. Symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection (nasal congestion, runny nose, and cough) often develop within 2-3 days after onset of the sore throat. Self-limited infections can be treated without seeing a medical provider.

**Symptoms:**
- Sore throat
- Swollen lymph nodes (glands) in the neck
- Fever up to 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Fatigue
- Muscle aches
- Nasal congestion, runny nose, cough within 2-3 days

**Self-care measures:**
- Rest
- Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids
- Use saline nose drops to loosen mucus
- Use Ibuprofen (Advil®) 600 mg every 6-8 hours or Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) 650 mg every 6 hours as needed to reduce fever/discomfort
- Gargle with salt water and use throat sprays/lozenges (containing Benzocaine) for throat pain

**Limit spread to others:**
- Avoid intimate contact and sharing cups and utensils
- Cover all coughs
- Stay home and away from others until fever-free for more than 24-hours (temperature should be less than 100 degrees Fahrenheit without medication)
- Wash hands frequently
- Wear a mask

**When to seek care from a medical provider:**
- Fever over 102 degrees Fahrenheit
- Fever over 101 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 3 days
- Unable to swallow your oral secretions (spit)
- Significant/worsening swelling of only one tonsil
- Sore throat does not improve over 2-3 days and you do not have a runny nose, congestion, or cough

**Special note:** Strep tests are less reliable until 24-hours after onset of sore throat. In order to provide you with the most reliable care, SHCC does not recommend a strep test until you have had a sore throat for more than 24-hours

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