**Tonsillitis**

Tonsillitis is an infection of the throat that causes the tonsils to become red, tender, and swollen. Tonsils are collections of lymphoid tissue at the back of the throat. Each tonsil has crevices (crypts). Tonsils help fight nose and throat infections and keep infection from spreading to other parts of the body for the first 18 months of life.

**CAUSES**

Sudden (acute) tonsillitis is usually caused by infection with streptococcal bacteria. Long-lasting (chronic) tonsillitis occurs when the crypts of the tonsils become filled with pieces of food and bacteria, which makes it easy for the tonsils to become repeatedly infected.

**SYMPTOMS**

Symptoms of tonsillitis include:

* A sore throat, with possible difficulty swallowing.
* White patches on the tonsils.
* Fever.
* Tiredness
* New episodes of snoring during sleep, when you did not snore before.
* Small, foul-smelling, yellowish-white pieces of material (tonsilloliths) that you occasionally cough up or spit out. The tonsilloliths can also cause you to have bad breath.

**DIAGNOSIS**

Tonsillitis can be diagnosed through a physical exam. Diagnosis can be confirmed with the results of lab test including a throat culture.

**TREATMENT**

The goals of tonsillitis treatment include the reduction of the severity and duration of symptoms and prevention of associated conditions. Symptoms of tonsillitis can be improved with the use of steroids to reduce the swelling. Tonsillitis caused by bacteria can be treated with antibiotics. Usually, treatment with antibiotics is started before the cause of the tonsillitis is known. However, if it is determined that that the cause is not bacterial, antibiotic medicines will not treat the tonsillitis. If attacks of tonsillitis are severe and frequent, your health care provider may recommend surgery to remove the tonsils (tonsillectomy).

**HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS**

* Rest as much as possible and get plenty of sleep
* Drink plenty of fluids. While the throat is very sore, eat soft foods or liquids, such as sherbet, soups, or instant breakfast drinks.
* Eat frozen ice pops.
* Gargle with a warm or cold liquid to help soothe the throat. Mix ¼ teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon of baking soda in 8oz of water.

**SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:**

* Large, tender lumps develop in your neck.
* A rash develops.
* A green, yellow-brown, or bloody substance is coughed up.
* You are unable to swallow liquids or food for 24 hours.
* You notice that only one of the tonsils is swollen,.

**SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:**

* You develop any new symptoms such as vomiting, severe headache, stiff neck, chest pain, or trouble breathing or swallowing.
* You have severe throat pain along with drooling or voice changes.
* You have sever pain, unrelieved with recommended medications.
* You are unable to fully open the mouth.
* You develop redness, swelling, or severe pain anywhere in the neck.
* You have a fever.