

Tonsillitis

Information leaflet

The tonsils are part of your immune system and help to fight infection. Your tonsils are situated at the back of your throat and are located on both sides. They can become inflamed and painful when they are infected with bacteria and viruses causing tonsillitis.

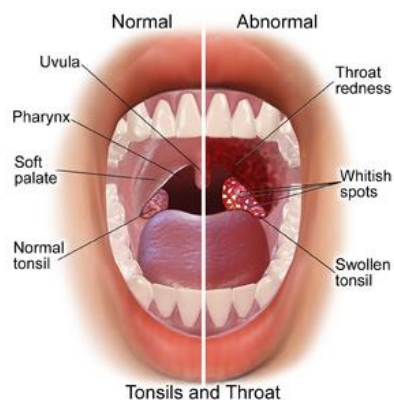


Figure 1: Normal v Inflamed tonsil

Risk Factors:

- Smoking
- Poor oral hygiene

Symptoms

- Sore throat, especially when swallowing
- Difficulty swallowing (this may cause pooling of saliva)
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Pain in the ears (often referred pain)
- Unilateral (one sided) sore throat may indicate an abscess.

Initial management

- Simple analgesia to control pain and temperature
- Good oral intake – focus on hydration, small regular sips of fluids
- Arrange GP appointment for assessment: they will be able to advise whether your symptoms can be managed in the community – i.e. oral antibiotics and pain killers or whether you need assessment in Hospital.

When to attend A&E

1. You are unable to swallow fluids
2. You are unable to swallow your antibiotics/pain killers
3. You are unwell – high temperatures, vomiting, dehydrated, confusion
4. GP refers you to A&E (or ENT)

What to expect in Hospital?

Assessment: observations, examination +/-blood tests

If necessary, you will have fluids given through a drip and antibiotics.

If it is decided by the doctors seeing you that you need further treatment in hospital, you will be admitted to a ward.

If are able to swallow fluids and medication you will be discharged

with oral medication and safety advice.

What is important after discharge?

Acute tonsillitis can take a couple of weeks to recover from. This is important because when you are discharged you may still have symptoms. It is important that you rest to aid recovery.

It is important to take regular pain killers particularly before eating meals, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen.

Maintain good hydration by drinking fluids – little and often

Complete the full course of antibiotics as prescribed even if you start to feel better.

Use mouthwash to ensure good oral hygiene and also alleviate pain.

Typically, you will not require follow up, unless you are experiencing recurrent episodes of tonsillitis and this is having a significant impact on your life.

Upon discharge, if you are unable to maintain adequate fluid intake or you are unable to swallow medication, or you are vomiting please contact the hospital.

**Between 8am – 4pm call Ward 8C
01422 223813**

Outside of these hours you will need to attend A&E

Further information

<https://cks.nice.org.uk/sore-throat-acute>
<https://patient.info/doctor/tonsillitis-pro>