



condition

# Tonsillitis

class

Ear, Nose And Throat

---

description

The tonsils lie at the back of the throat. Normally tonsils appear as two pale and flat circles of tissue on either side of the throat. If the tonsils are infected they become red, swollen and painful. Attacks of tonsillitis usually only last about a week.

causes

Tonsillitis is usually caused by a viral infection. Occasionally, the infection is bacterial.

symptoms

If you open your mouth and look at your tonsils they will look large and red and you might be able to see white spots on them. The glands in the neck can also become swollen and painful. A **cough, headache** and a very **sore throat** usually accompany tonsillitis. You may also have a raised temperature and feel very tired. You might find eating and drinking painful and sometimes just swallowing will be very uncomfortable.

treatment

Because a virus usually causes tonsillitis, antibiotics are not normally prescribed. You can take paracetamol in the recommended dose to ease the pain and reduce your **temperature**. Gargling with soluble aspirin (dissolved in water) for a few minutes, three or four times a day, can be very effective at easing the pain. You can either swallow the gargle and use this as pain relief instead of paracetamol or spit it out. If the infection is severe or does not seem to be improving after a few days, it may mean that you've developed a bacterial infection and your doctor might decide to give you a course of antibiotics. Removal of the tonsils (tonsillectomy) is not usually recommended unless you keep getting the infection

when to consult a doctor

If your symptoms are not getting any better after about three days, you should visit your doctor. If your symptoms are severe or if you have a child with tonsillitis and are worried about any of the symptoms, you should seek medical advice.

## healthy tips

- + Drink plenty of fluids
- + Take regular doses of painkillers, following instructions on packaging
- + Gargling with soluble aspirin can ease a sore throat