

Tonsillitis

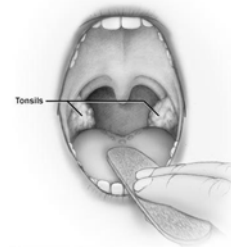
The tonsils are fleshy pieces of lymphatic tissue that rest in the back of the throat above and below the tongue. As part of the immune system, the tonsils help fight infections. However, if bacteria or viruses contaminate the tonsils, the result is an infectious inflammation and swelling of the tonsils - or **tonsillitis**.

Tonsillitis has both viral and bacterial causes, though many cases are caused by viruses. When tonsillitis is caused by the Group A streptococcal bacteria, the condition is more commonly termed "strep throat".

Most infections begin when a person breathes in bacteria- or virus-infected droplets that another person has breathed, coughed, or sneezed out.

The most common symptoms of Tonsillitis are:

- Fever and enlarged inflamed tonsils with white patches (exudate)
- Muffled voice
- Tender lymph nodes in neck
- Sore throat, difficulty swallowing
- Runny, stuffy nose
- Headache



A strep test (throat swab) may be employed to determine if the cause of tonsillitis is the bacterial infection known as strep throat.

Tonsillitis may be treated with a course of antibiotics, be sure to take as directed and complete the entire course to prevent antibiotic resistant bacteria and reinfection in 2-3 weeks.

Other treatment and preventive options for tonsillitis include:

- Gargling with warm salt water
- Drink plenty of water/fluids, especially if you have a fever
- Change your toothbrush after you have been on antibiotics for 3-4 days
- Wash your hands
- Cough and/or sneeze into a tissue
- Avoid sharing drinking glasses, water bottles or eating utensils

Return to your Healthcare Practitioner if your symptoms return or worsen after treatment.

Web links for more information:

Web MD: <http://www.webmd.com/oral-health/tc/tonsillitis-topic-overview>

Family Doctor.org: <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/tonsillitis.html>

Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/tonsillitis/DS00273>

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment, please call Millersville University Health Services at 871-5250.