Sore Throat

A sore throat is an inflamed or irritated throat that causes pain or discomfort when a person swallows. Other signs may include a fever, white patches in the throat and swollen lymph glands in the neck.

Causes
A sore throat may be caused by:
• An infection
• An allergy
• Low humidity
• Smoking
• Shouting or voice strain
• Breathing in chemical fumes or air pollution

Things you can do to feel better
• Get plenty of rest.
• Drink plenty of liquids. Drink hot liquids, such as tea and soup, to soothe the throat and thin mucus.
• Gargle with warm salt water. Mix ½ teaspoon of salt in 1 cup or 240 milliliters (ml) of warm water.
• Suck on sore throat lozenges or hard candies.
• Use over the counter pain medicine. Children should not take aspirin.
• Stop smoking and avoid second-hand smoke.

In most cases, a sore throat will heal on its own. See your doctor if you have a fever, a rash or your signs worsen. A swab of the back of the throat may be done to see if you have an infection.
• If you have a bacterial infection, such as strep throat, antibiotic medicine may be ordered by your doctor. Take all of the medicine until it is gone. Do not stop taking it when you feel better.
• Viral infections, such as a cold or flu (influenza), cannot be treated with antibiotics.

Call your doctor right away if you have:
• Trouble breathing
• Severe problems swallowing
• A fever over 100.5 degrees F or 38 degrees C
• A rash
• Tender or swollen lymph glands in the neck

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.