

# Strep Throat

There are many causes of sore throats, although most are viral. There is only one bacterial form that we treat called Strep Throat. The only way to diagnosis Strep Throat is with a positive throat test. (Only scarlet fever can be diagnosis with a classic rash without a test). You child should never be put on an antibiotic for a sore throat without a positive throat test.

Now here is the confusing part. Many people have strep living on their throats (as many as 30% of well kids can be colonized). So just because a test is positive it doesn't mean your child needs to be on an antibiotic. How do you know? There are certain signs of a viral illness, if your child has these then a throat test should NOT be done because a positive test probably just means that the strep is there, not causing any problems. Signs of a virus are: Runny nose, Cough, Hoarseness, Pink eye, Diarrhea or Ulcers in the mouth. Also children under three years old should not be tested because the risk for rheumatic fever (which is why we treat Strep Throat) is so low as stated in the foremost authority on infectious diseases, *Red Book*.

So to best protect your child remember these rules-

If your child has:      a sore throat,  
                                    Fever,  
                                    Headache  
                                    Stomachache

He may have Strep throat,

But if he had these then **he does not have strep** (even with all of the above):

Younger than three  
Runny nose,  
Cough,  
Hoarseness,  
Pink eye,  
Diarrhea  
Ulcers in the mouth

Don't let anyone test your child or give him an antibiotic if one is not needed.