



Press Release

Sore throat: When to use antibiotics

Most sore throats are caused by viruses and do not require antibiotics. In some cases, like a strep throat infection, a lab test will need to be done to see if you need antibiotics.

New Delhi, Dec 17, 2016: Most throat infections are viral and do not require the administration of antibiotics. Some sore throats are caused by bacteria, such as group A Streptococcus and require antibiotic medications. Sore throats caused by these bacteria are known as a strep throat infection.

A sore throat is more likely to be caused by group A Streptococcus if the onset of pain is sudden, swallowing hurts, and fever is present. Such cases can be evaluated using a stand-alone rapid antigen detection test. Because children younger than 3 years are unlikely to get strep throat infection, testing is unnecessary, with the exception of certain circumstances such as an infected older sibling. School going children with a sore throat must be monitored closely as an untreated strep throat infection may lead to rheumatic heart disease in the future.

Padma Shri Awardee Dr. K.K Aggarwal, President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and National President Elect Indian Medical Association (IMA), stated that, “Although bacterial and viral throat infections often have overlapping symptoms, other symptoms, such as cough, rhinorrhea, hoarseness, and oral ulcers, strongly suggest a viral infection. Throat cultures should only be used to confirm negative antigen tests in children and adolescents. Once strep throat is confirmed, the treatment of choice remains a 10-day course of penicillin (or its congener amoxicillin), which has a narrow spectrum of activity, is cheaply available, and carries a low risk for adverse events.”

Penicillin or amoxicillin is the choice for treating strep because they are very effective and safe in those without penicillin allergy, and there is increasing resistance of strep to the broader-spectrum — and more expensive — macrolides, including azithromycin.

“Certain conditions and factors can increase your risk of a sore throat like Age (children between 5-15 years of age are most vulnerable), contact with infectious person, winter and early spring months, cold air, pollution, weak immune system, allergies and acid reflux disease. Sore throat may also be due to other reasons like upper respiratory tract infection. A laboratory diagnostic test is the only way to differentiate. Profusely using antibiotics even when they are not needed can be harmful, costly and make the medicine less effective. Patients should be aware of this”, added **Dr. Aggarwal.**



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About Heart Care Foundation of India

Initiated in 1986, the Heart Care Foundation of India is a leading National NGO working in the field of creating mass health awareness among people from all walks of life and providing solutions for India's everyday healthcare needs. The NGO uses consumer-based entertainment modules to impart health education and increase awareness amongst people. A leading example of this is the Perfect Health Mela; an annual event started in 1993 that is attended by over 2-3 lakh people each year. The Mela showcases activities across categories such as health education seminars and check-ups, entertainment programs, lifestyle exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and competitions. In addition to this, the NGO conducts programs and camps to train people on the technique of hands only CPR through its CPR 10 mantra for revival after a sudden cardiac arrest. They currently hold three Limca book of world records for the maximum number of people trained in hands-only CPR in one go. Keeping article 21 of the Indian Constitution in mind, which guarantees a person Right to Life, Heart Care Foundation of India has also recently initiated a project called the Sameer Malik Heart Care Foundation Fund to ensure that no one dies of a heart disease just because they cannot afford treatment.

For more information, please contact

Heart Care Foundation of India

Sanjeev Khanna-9871079105

Md Adib Ahmed- 9873716235

Email- media.hcfi@gmail.com