

Herpangina

Definition

- A viral infection that causes little ulcers in the back of the mouth

Health Information

Symptoms

- Small ulcers (sores) surrounded by a red ring. May first look like tiny water blisters before they change to open sores.
- Located near the tonsils and on the roof of the mouth.(soft palate)
- The average child has 5 of these ulcers, though there can be more.
- There are no ulcers in the front of the mouth or on the gums.
- Sore throat is the main symptom. Pain is made worse when the child swallows.
- Also causes pain with swallowing and decreased appetite.
- Fever for 2 to 3 days
- No runny, cough or other symptoms of a cold

Cause

- Herpangina is caused by Coxsackie A viruses.
- A person can get herpangina up to 5 times.

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent spread of infection.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Herpangina is a throat infection caused by a Coxsackie virus.
- It will go away on its own.
- Your job is to make sure your child drinks enough fluids.
- Herpangina can be treated at home.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Sore Throat Pain Relief:

- Age over 1 year. Can sip warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice.
- Age over 6 years. Can also suck on hard candy or lollipops. Butterscotch seems to help.
- Age over 8 years. Can also gargle. Use warm water with a little table salt added. A liquid antacid can be added instead of salt. Use Mylanta or the store brand. No prescription is needed.
- Medicated throat sprays or lozenges are generally not helpful.

3. Pain Medicine:

- To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.

4. Fever:

- For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
- For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.

5. **Antibiotics Not Needed:**

- Antibiotics are not helpful for viral infections.
- They can only kill bacteria.

6. **Fluids and Soft Diet:**

- Try to get your child to drink adequate fluids.
- Goal: Keep your child well hydrated.
- Cold drinks, milk shakes, popsicles, slushes, and sherbet are good choices.
- **Solids.** Offer a soft diet. Also avoid foods that need much chewing. Avoid citrus, salty, or spicy foods. Note: Fluid intake is much more important than eating any solids.
- Swollen tonsils can make some solid foods hard to swallow.
- For babies, offer fluids in a cup, spoon or syringe rather than a bottle. Reason: The nipple may increase pain.

7. **What to Expect:**

- Fever lasts 2 to 3 days.
- The sore throat and ulcers last 4 or 5 days.

8. **Return to School:**

- Your child can return to school after the fever is gone.
- Your child should feel well enough to join in normal activities.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or drooling occurs
- Sore throat lasts more than 7 days
- Fever lasts more than 3 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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