

Infection of the tonsils caused by bacteria or a virus.

What to look for

- fever.
- a very sore throat with red, swollen tonsils with white discharge or spots on the tonsils.
- swollen and tender lymph nodes in the neck under the jaw.
- Headache.
- severe pain at the roof of the mouth, and difficulty swallowing.
- muffled speech

The tonsils are part of the lymphatic system. They are present at birth and grow during the early years of life and regress later on at puberty.

When they become infected, the resulting condition is called tonsillitis.

Tonsillitis most commonly affects young children as the tonsils are apparently at their most potent and strong, taking in any foreign material that threatens the body. But as the child grows, the tonsils shrink, and infections become less common.

Causes

Tonsillitis is caused by the streptococcus bacterium. Cold or flu viruses sometimes also cause tonsillitis.

Traditional Treatment

You can check your child's tonsils by asking the child to open their mouth and looking at them at the back of the throat. If they are red and swollen, go and see your doctor.

Personal Care

- A saltwater gargle can relieve soreness.
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt

Prevention

Your child's tonsils may have to be removed if the tonsillitis is a recurring problem otherwise the condition will usually improve with time and treatments.

When to seek further professional advice

- your child has symptoms of tonsillitis.