

Tonsillitis

Description

Tonsillitis is an inflammation of the tonsils, the small glands found at the back of the throat behind the tongue.

The symptoms of tonsillitis may include: a sore throat, swollen glands, difficulty swallowing, headache, fever or coughing.

Tonsillitis may be bacterial or viral. It is more common for tonsillitis to be caused by the same viruses which affect the respiratory (breathing) system and cause influenza, croup, or the common cold.

How does it spread?

Tonsillitis may be spread from person to person through throat or nasal fluids, contact with contaminated surfaces or airborne droplets through coughing and sneezing or sharing utensils.

Infectious period

A child may be infectious for one to two days before the appearance of symptoms. The child will remain infectious for as long as they have symptoms.

Exclusion period

A child with tonsillitis should stay at home if they are unwell or are coughing or sneezing as the result of the infection.

If antibiotics are prescribed for bacterial tonsillitis, a child can return to the centre 24 hours after treatment on antibiotics begins.

Responsibilities of staff

- Tell parents that a child at the centre has hand tonsillitis.
- Display information about tonsillitis on your notice board.
- Make sure staff and children's hands are washed often with soap and warm water and are dried to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Wash all toys and surfaces with hot soapy water, and then disinfect with 1:10 dilute bleach (1 teaspoon bleach to 500ml water).
- Wash smaller toys in the dishwasher.
- Pay particular attention to resources that children put in their mouths such as pretend food, cups, etc.
- Remove shared food, drink and other utensils.

Responsibilities of parents

- Keep your unwell child home until they can comfortably participate in normal activities.

Treatment

A family doctor will determine whether the infection is most likely to be viral or bacterial. Sometimes antibiotics are prescribed for bacterial tonsillitis.

A child with viral tonsillitis will require lots of rest, fluids and food. Over the counter medications may be used to reduce fever and pain in order to make the child more comfortable.