

Tonsillitis and quinsy: treatment

This leaflet is for patients with tonsillitis and quinsy. If you do not understand anything or have any other concerns, please speak to a member of staff.

What is tonsillitis?

It is an infection and inflammation of the tonsils. When the main site of infection is within the tonsils they swell, become red and inflamed and may show a surface coating of white spots. Some cases of tonsillitis are due to glandular fever and may take much longer to fully recover.

What is quinsy?

It is an abscess or a pus build up on your tonsil. It usually only occurs on one side and can occur after having tonsillitis. A fully developed abscess requires you to be admitted in hospital where antibiotics are given through a drip. They may also need to drain the pus under local anaesthetic spray.

How are they treated?

Pain: To ease discomfort, you need to take painkillers regularly before meals, or as required (with care not to exceed the recommended dose). Please do not take any painkillers containing aspirin, unless prescribed by your doctor. If the prescribed painkillers do not relieve the discomfort, or/and your pain has increased, please contact your GP or the ENT department (during office hours) and the ward (out of hours) for advice. The ward may put you in touch with the on-call doctor. Telephone numbers are at the back of this booklet.

Medication: In addition to the pain medication, you will be given a seven-day supply of antibiotics to take home to continue treating the infection in your throat. It is important that you take them as prescribed and that you complete the course as advised by your nurse.

To help your recovery, please follow this advice:

- Take plenty of rest and sleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take pain relief before meals to aid swallowing and eat normally.

- Ensure you complete the course of antibiotics.
- Keep your mouth clean by cleaning your teeth and having regular mouthwashes to gargle. Gargling with warm salt water mouthwashes can also help.
- If you smoke, stop for at least one week, as it will make your throat sore and may slow down healing.
- Try to avoid people with colds and coughs and stay out of public places such as supermarkets, and smoky, dusty environment such as pubs.
- If your symptoms return or if you develop pain in your throat and difficulty swallowing, please contact your GP.

Returning to work

Depending on your job, you may need to take up to one week off work after you leave hospital. You may need a sick certificate for your employer so please ask your doctor or your nurse before you leave hospital.

Follow-up

You will not need a follow-up appointment. However, your doctor may refer you for a tonsillectomy (surgery to remove the tonsils) if you have had more than one episode of quinsy in one year. If you agree, you will be listed for a tonsillectomy and you will be given a date for the operation.

How to contact us

Clinical Admin Team (CAT1)
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm)
Tel: 0118 322 7139 or email rbbh.CAT1@nhs.net
Dorrell Ward Tel: 0118 322 7172 / 8101

For further information about the Trust, visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages/formats upon request.

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