



SIGN

Management of sore throat and indications for tonsillectomy

Quick Reference Guide

▶ DIAGNOSIS OF ACUTE SORE THROAT

B Clinical examination should not be relied upon to differentiate between viral and bacterial sore throat	B Throat swabs or rapid antigen testing should not be carried out routinely in sore throat
--	---

▶ MANAGEMENT OF ACUTE SORE THROAT

C Sore throat associated with stridor or respiratory difficulty is an absolute indication for admission to hospital	A — Antibiotics should <i>not</i> be used: B — for symptomatic relief B — specifically to prevent the development of rheumatic fever or acute glomerulonephritis B — routinely to prevent cross infection in the general population C — specifically to prevent suppurative complications
C Paracetamol is the drug of choice for analgesia in sore throat	
B Routine use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs) is not recommended	
There is insufficient evidence to support a recommendation on the routine use of antibiotics in acute sore throat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In severe cases, where the practitioner is concerned about the clinical condition of the patient, antibiotics should not be withheld

▶ INDICATIONS FOR TONSILLECTOMY

C Patients should meet <u>all</u> of the following criteria: — sore throats are due to tonsillitis — five or more episodes of sore throat per year — symptoms for at least a year — episodes of sore throat are disabling and prevent normal functioning	C Following specialist referral, a six month period of watchful waiting is recommended to establish the pattern of symptoms and allow the patient to consider the implications of operation
	B Once a decision is made for tonsillectomy, this should be performed as soon as possible to maximise the period of benefit

Key: **A B C** indicates grade of recommendation Good practice point

© Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network, 1999

Derived from the national clinical guideline recommended for use in Scotland by the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN)

Royal College of Physicians, 9 Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JQ

SIGN Guidelines are also available on the SIGN website: www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sign/home.htm

This guideline was issued in January 1999 and will be reviewed in 2001