

# CAREFUL ANTIBIOTIC USE

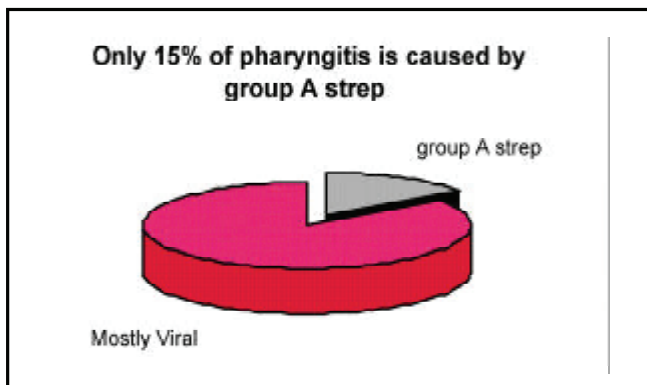
To avoid antibiotic resistance: treat only proven group A strep

## PHARYNGITIS IN CHILDREN<sup>1</sup>

*"If you are entirely comfortable selecting which pharyngitis patients to treat 10 days with penicillin, perhaps you don't understand the situation."*

- Stillerman and Bernstein, 1961

- **Most sore throats are caused by viral agents.<sup>2</sup>**



- **Clinical findings alone do not adequately distinguish Strep vs. Non-Strep pharyngitis.<sup>3</sup>**

BUT, prominent rhinorrhea, cough, hoarseness, conjunctivitis, or diarrhea suggest a VIRAL etiology.<sup>4</sup>

- **Antigen tests (rapid Strep kits) or culture should be positive before beginning antibiotic treatment.**

Experts suggest confirming negative results on antigen tests with culture.<sup>5</sup>

*Remember that most cases with clinical signs of strep, like exudate and adenopathy, are viral.*

Experts discourage treatment pending culture results<sup>5-6</sup>, but if you do...

- **Make sure to stop antibiotics when culture is negative.**
- **Discourage parents from saving antibiotics.**

If an antibiotic is prescribed:

- **Use a penicillin as treatment for group A strep.<sup>7</sup>**

NO group A strep are resistant to penicillin. Treatment is 90% effective at elimination of strep, and may be higher in the prevention of acute rheumatic fever (ARF). Carriers are at very low risk for both ARF and spreading infection.<sup>7</sup>

- **Use cephalosporin, clindamycin, azithromycin, or clarithromycin if penicillin allergic.**

### References

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3. Poses RM, Cebul RD, Collins M, et al. The accuracy of experienced physicians' probability estimates for patients with sore throat: implications for decision making. *JAMA* 1985;254:925-29.
4. Denson MR. Viral pharyngitis. *Semin Pediatr Infect Dis* 1995;6:62-68.
5. American Academy of Pediatrics. Group A streptococcal infections. In: Pickering LK, ed. 2000 Red Book: Report of the Committee on infectious Diseases. 25th ed. Elk Grove, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2000:528.
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