

Is your sore throat strep?

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Is Your Sore Throat Strep? By Kristin Hayes, About. com Guide Updated October 06, 2009 About. comHealth's Disease and Condition content is reviewed by the Medical Review Board Question: Is Your Sore Throat Strep? It can be difficult to tell if your sore throat is strep or simply a cold virus. However, in most cases of strep throat there are some key differences. Answer: The only way to know for sure if your sore throat is strep is to have a rapid strep test or a throatculture.

These tests must be performed at a physician's office, but let's face it you can't go running in to the doctor every time your throat gets a little scratchy. Characteristics of strep throat include a severe sore throat that may cause pain or difficulty swallowing. The back of the throat is usually very red and there may be white patches in the back of the throat or on the tonsils. The tonsils and lymph nodes also may be swollen. Some people get a fever. It is not uncommon to be very tired and achy or to lose your appetite.

In some cases you may get a rash. The biggest difference between strep throat and a cold virus is that strep throat usually does not cause runny nose, congestion, sneezing or coughing. All cases of strep throat must be treated with an antibiotic to avoid serious complications including heart problems, kidney problems or Scarlett fever -- especially in children. For these reasons, it is very important to see the doctor if you or your child have symptoms of strep throat.