

- Alternative medicine / COVID-19

Home remedies for sore throats

Suffering from a Covid-related scratchy throat? PRUDENCE WADE has suggestions for easy things you can do to help

Western Daily Press · 29 Jul 2022 · 24

A SORE throat could be the main symptom of coronavirus.



Whether it's caused by Covid, a cold, or not, a sore throat is unpleasant - but it is easy to treat

The Zoe Covid study has collated the top 20 symptoms reported in the last week by 17,500 people who tested positive, with 58% of people reporting a sore throat. A headache came next (49%), followed by a blocked nose, a cough with no phlegm, and a runny nose (all at 40%).

It feels different from the start of the pandemic, when symptoms such as a fever and a loss of smell were some of the most characteristic signs of Covid.

Professor Tim Spector, Zoe scientific co-founder and lead scientist on the Zoe Health Study, said: "Covid is still rampant. Zoe Health Study data shows that there were over 350,000 daily Covid cases this week – a new record for the UK.

"So if you have any cold-like symptoms at the moment it's nearly twice as likely to be Covid as a cold."

Even if you don't have Covid, a sore throat can strike at any time – with a summer cold, or perhaps by overexerting your throat singing at a festival.

While a scratchy throat isn't the end of the world – if it progresses to anything worse and you have concerns, consult your GP – it can still be pretty painful and annoying.

So what else can you do at home to ease a sore throat?

Gargle salt water then spit it out

"Salt water is a simple home remedy anyone can try," advises Dr Deborah Lee of Dr Fox Online Pharmacy (doctorfox.co.uk).

"Mix one teaspoon of salt with a few inches of warm water, dissolve, and gargle slowly. Keep the salt water in contact with the sore area for as long as you can, as the salt has a local anti-inflammatory action."

Suck ice cubes, lollies or ice cream

Chances are you've already stocked up on ice lollies to help keep cool.

"Lowering the body temperature has been shown in many medical studies to reduce inflammation," suggests Dr Lee. "Cold lowers the production of proinflammatory cytokines (chemical messengers that give signals for inflammation) and other inflammatory markers. Less inflammation, less discomfort."

Have some honey

Dr Lee cites a 2020 review of 14 clinical studies which "concluded that honey is useful in treating symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections".

“Honey has antibacterial and antiviral properties. It also works as an anti-inflammatory... and is also a powerful antioxidant.”

“Mix two teaspoons of honey with hot water, dissolve, and sip slowly. Or mix it with lemon juice, to give a boost of vitamin C.”

Take a hot shower

This one might not be the most appealing thing to do in a heatwave, but it could help ease your sore throat. Dr Lee says cranking up the temperature of your shower “helps moisturise the throat and nasal passages through inhalation of the steam.

“If your throat is dry, this causes evaporation of water from the mouth and throat and makes your throat feel scratchy and irritating. Humidified air, such as steam, can be very soothing.

“You may want to humidify the house too, which you can do simply by positioning bowls of water around the room, especially on or near radiators.”

Try menthol throat lozenges

If you have any menthol throat lozenges knocking about, now’s the time to dig them out. “Menthol is made by combining eucalyptus and peppermint oils, and can soothe a sore throat and help reduce a cough,” says Dr Lee. “It works by desensitising specific pain receptors in the back of the throat, resulting in numbness.”