

What's causing your sore throat?

Is it a common sore throat or strep? We all know that raw, scratchy feeling in the back of the throat. The cause may be as simple as dry winter air, seasonal allergies, or a cold coming on. But sometimes the culprit is strep, a bacterial infection that can be dangerous if untreated. There are warning signs that you might have strep and not an average sore throat.

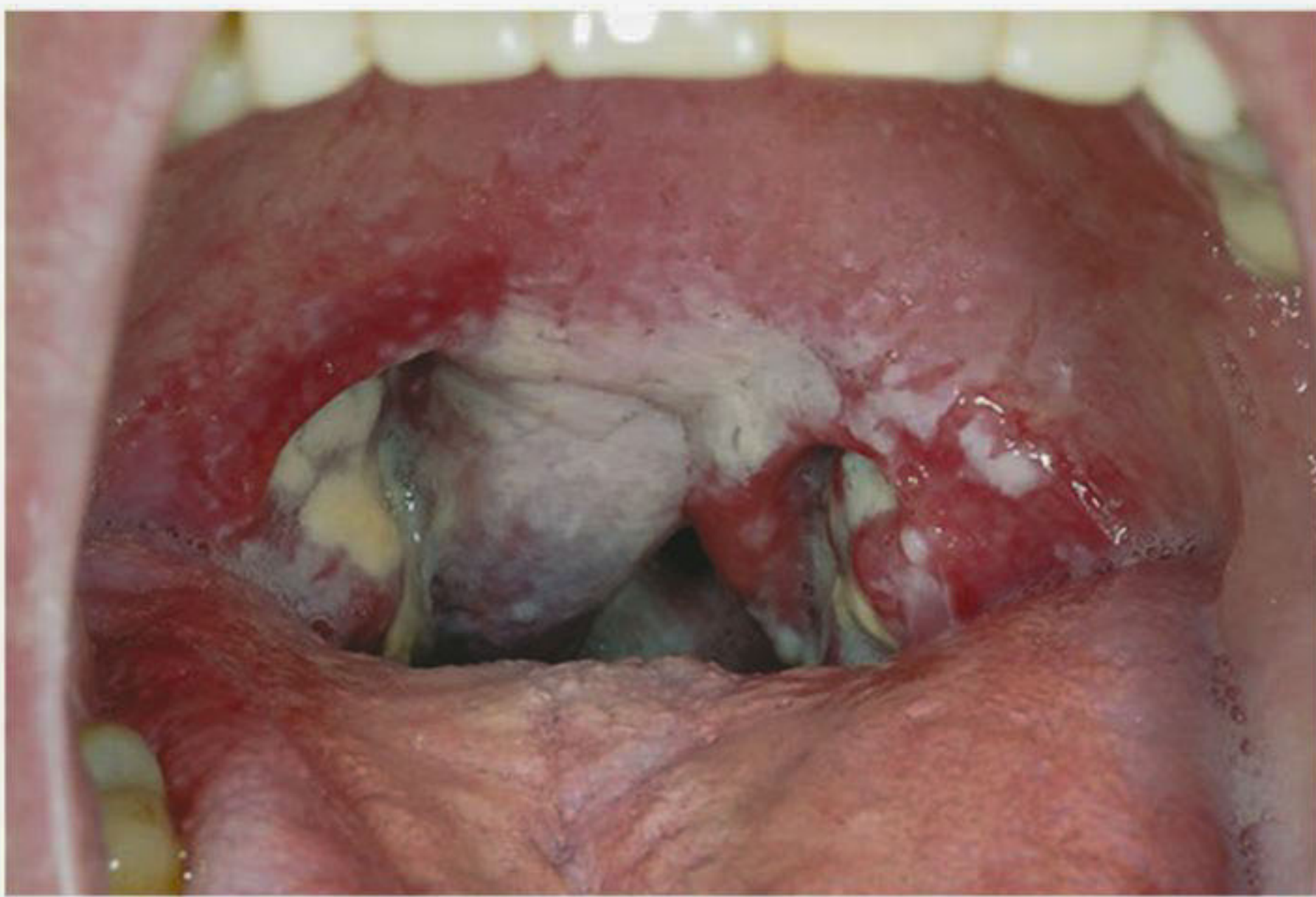
Look for unusual spots. Are your tonsils red and swollen? Are there white patches on them or in the back of your throat? Is there pus? If so, it is not strep for sure — other conditions also cause these signs — but it is clear that something is wrong, and you should see the doctor.

Are there cold symptoms? Coughing and postnasal drip can make your throat feel bad, but you are less likely to get them with strep. A virus causes the congestion, runny nose, sore throat and other symptoms that come with a cold.

How high is the fever? Colds sometimes cause a fever, but it is generally low grade. A sore throat with a temperature over 101°F raises the likelihood of strep. But you can have strep even with little or no fever.

Are the lymph nodes swollen? Your lymph nodes are there to trap and destroy germs. When part of your body is infected, the nearest lymph nodes spring into action and swell as they carry out their job. They are more likely to be swollen and tender when you have strep.

How much does it hurt? A sore throat caused by a cold can be painful, but it usually goes away after a couple of days.



Strep throat tends to hurt worse and last longer. The pain may be so bad that it is hard to swallow. In some cases, strep may cause nausea, a lack of appetite, or pain in your head and belly.

Is there a rash? One less common sign of strep is a rough, sandpaper-like rash. It starts on your neck and chest, and then spreads to the rest of your body. When this happens, the infection is known as scarlet fever. It looks scary, but it will start to fade after a few days. Antibiotics can help.

What is strep? An infection called Group A Streptococcus causes strep. Antibiotics can ease strep symptoms, get

rid of it faster, and lower the risk of complications. Without treatment, the infection can affect your heart or other organs. It is rare, but it can lead to serious illness.

Colds and antibiotics: just say no — you cannot get rid of a cold-caused sore throat with antibiotics. These drugs only work against bacteria. And colds result from a virus. Besides, taking them when you do not need them can make them stop working for your body. Also, bacteria that are exposed to antibiotics over and over can turn into "superbugs" that do not respond to standard medications at all.

Antibiotics for Strep — if you do have

this throat infection, your doctor may give you a shot or prescribe 5 to 10 days of antibiotic pills. You will probably feel better in a day or two, but it is vital to take the entire course of medication anyway — otherwise some of the bacteria may survive.

Remember, strep can still be contagious until you have been taking the meds for 24 to 48 hours. Wash your hands often, do not share utensils, and throw away your toothbrush after you have had strep.

Try a humidifier or vaporizer. Breathing in steam can keep your throat moist and cut down on pain. Drape a towel over your head to trap the steam, and breathe deeply. Try this for 5 to 10 minutes several times a day.

Use a warm compress. Place a warm heating pad against the outside of your throat. Or make your own compress by wetting a towel with hot water. This may be specially soothing if the lymph nodes in your neck are tender.

Stay hydrated. If you have a fever or if you are not drinking a lot because it hurts to swallow, your body will lose moisture. You need to get more fluids. Avoid citrus drinks, which can irritate an inflamed throat.

Use pain relievers. Do not tough it out. Over-the-counter pain relievers can temporarily dull the pain of a sore throat.

Check out decongestants. These meds can dry up a stuffy nose that is draining into your throat and making it feel raw.

What if it doesn't get better? If a sore throat lasts over a week or gets worse, check with your doctor again.

HEALTH bulletin

Paget's disease of the breast

Many breast and cervical cancer deaths could be prevented with cost-effective interventions

Every year 800,000 women die of cervical and breast cancer, but where a woman lives will largely determine her chance of survival. Two thirds of breast cancer deaths and 9 out of 10 deaths from cervical cancer occur in low- and middle income countries (LMICs).

The authors of a new three-paper series published in The Lancet say that country-led efforts to tackle breast, cervical, and other women's cancers in LMICs have so far been woefully inadequate and call for international efforts to end preventable deaths from breast and cervical cancer.

New estimates produced as part of the series reveal that the cost of inaction will be huge, with the number of women diagnosed with breast cancer every year worldwide expected to almost double from 1.7 million in 2015 to 3.2 million in 2030; whilst the number of women diagnosed with cervical cancer is predicted to rise by at least 25% to over 700,000 by 2030, most in LMICs.

Persistent under-investment in LMICs, which receive just 5 percent of global funding for cancer, has exacerbated the issue. As a result, these 'neglected diseases' have exerted substantial negative effects on women's health, family life, poverty, and economic development.

The series authors call for international efforts, similar to those that have led to major improvements in maternal health, to end preventable cases and deaths from breast and cervical cancer by 2030.



PROF DR ANISUR RAHMAN

At present time, there is an increasing awareness in the society about breast cancer, which is the second most common cancer among Bangladeshi women. Paget's disease, an extremely rare variety of breast cancer, can affect both female and male population. The danger is in the fact that the disease presents with skin surface changes in and around the nipple and hence may be ignored by the patient for a long time.

The symptoms of Paget's disease may include itching, tingling or redness in the nipple and/or areola; flaking, crusty or thickened skin on or around the nipple; a flattened nipple; discharge from the nipple that may be yellowish or bloody — these are often mistaken for those of some benign skin conditions like dermatitis or eczema. Because the early symptoms of Paget's disease mimic a benign skin condition and because the disease is rare, it has every risk of being

misdiagnosed at first, ultimately delaying the diagnosis.

Only a biopsy can confirm the diagnosis; various types of biopsy, like needle biopsy, wedge biopsy or punch biopsy may be used. Since most people who have Paget's disease of the breast also have one or more tumours inside the same breast, in addition to a nipple biopsy, the surgeon performs a clinical breast exam to check for lumps or other breast changes.

As many as 50% of people who have Paget's disease of the breast have a breast lump that can be felt in a clinical breast exam. The surgeon may ask for additional diagnostic tests.

For many years, mastectomy, with or without the removal of lymph nodes under the arm on the same side of chest was regarded as the standard surgery for Paget's disease of the breast.

However, that breast-conserving surgery that includes removal of the

nipple and areola, followed by whole breast radiation therapy, is a safe option for people with Paget's disease who do not have a palpable lump in their breast and whose mammograms do not reveal a tumour.

The prognosis of the disease depends on various factors — mainly delay in detection, age of the patient, spread of the disease, whether invasive cancer is present or not and presence of other tumours in the same breast. The presence of invasive cancer in the affected breast and the spread of cancer to nearby lymph nodes are associated with reduced survival.

An 80-year old Bangladeshi lady was admitted in United Hospital with the complaints of ulceration and pain in the left breast for last one year. On examination, it was seen that the left nipple and areola has been completely replaced by a large ulcer which has even spread beyond the areola. A clinical diagnosis of breast cancer (Paget's disease) was made which was subsequently confirmed by biopsy. After proper evaluation and consultation, mastectomy with axillary clearance under general anaesthesia was performed. This was well tolerated by the patient and she had an uneventful recovery.

My experience shows that Paget's disease of the breast, although rare, is not uncommon in Bangladesh.

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MENTAL HEALTH



Depression: let's talk

Depression is an illness that can happen to anybody. It causes mental anguish and affects people's ability to carry out everyday tasks, with sometimes devastating consequences for relationships with family and friends.

At worst, depression can lead to suicide. Fortunately, depression can be prevented and treated. The World Health Organisation (WHO) launched a one-year campaign: *Depression: let's talk* on the eve of this year's World Mental Health Day.

Depression is an illness characterised by persistent sadness and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least two weeks. In addition, people with depression normally have several of the following symptoms: a loss of energy; a change in appetite; sleeping more or less; anxiety; reduced concentration; indecisiveness; restlessness; feelings of worthlessness, guilt, or hopelessness; and thoughts of self-harm or suicide.

At its worst, depression can be a frightening, debilitating condition. Millions of people around the world live with depression. Many of these individuals and their families are afraid to talk about their struggles, and don't know where to turn for help.

However, depression is largely preventable and treatable. Recognising depression and seeking help is the first and most critical towards recovery.

Tonic launches Let's Move Bangladesh! challenge for November

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Tonic has launched the "Let's Move Bangladesh!" challenge from November 1, 2016. It officially kicked off via Tonic's Facebook page and website.

Anyone from any corner of Bangladesh can accept the challenge by making a pledge for a healthier life, posting photos of themselves in movement with the hashtag #LetsMoveBD, and passing the challenge on to someone else.

With this challenge, Tonic wants to focus on addressing 'why movement matters' — a recent survey conducted by Telenor Health and Nielsen Bangladesh revealed that knowledge of amount and frequency of physical activity was very high among Bangladeshis.

However, a lack of knowledge when it came to lifestyle change was reported as one of the main barriers preventing people from taking action. This shows that Bangladeshis have the desire to improve but do not have proper tools or guidance on how to go about doing so. This is where Tonic is stepping in to bridge the gap and act as a trusted partner to assist people in getting on the right path to wellness.

Tonic is Telenor Health's first step in addressing persistent health needs through the use of technology, providing innovative solutions to improve access to health information as well as making services affordable.

Since launching in June 2016, more than one million Bangladeshis have joined Tonic as members. Telenor Health is able to extend Tonic's services to all active GrameenPhone customers free of charge. Registration can be done instantly through USSD at *789#, online at www.mytonic.com, or by calling 789.



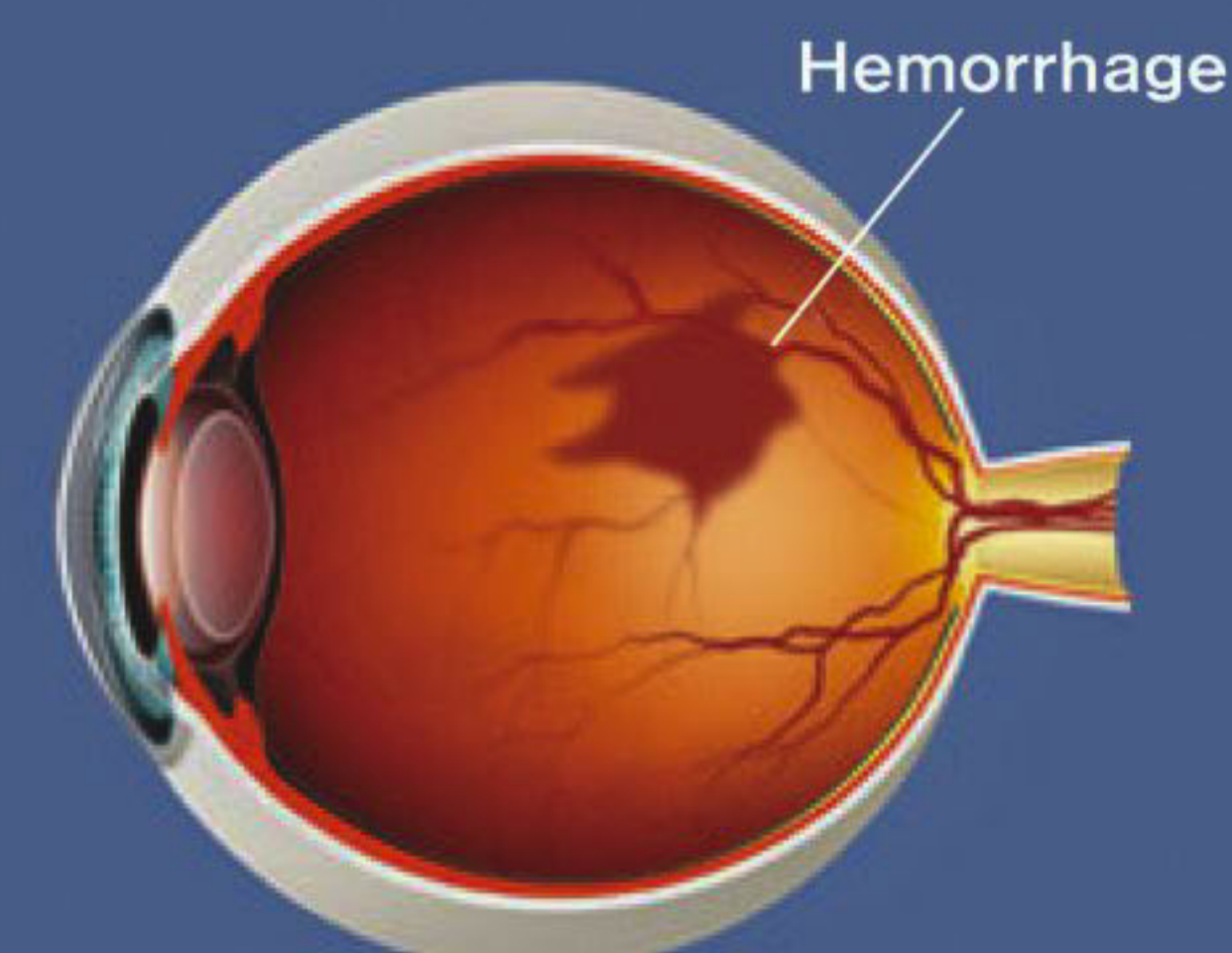
Eye Care for People with Diabetes

Diabetes can harm your eyes. It can damage the small blood vessels in your retina, which is the back part of your eye. This condition is called diabetic retinopathy. Diabetes also increases your risk of having glaucoma, cataracts and other eye problems.

Use these seven tips to take charge of your disease and protect your eyes:

- Schedule appointments with your eye doctor at least once a year.
- Keep your blood sugar under control.
- High blood pressure alone can lead to eye disease, so keep it in check.
- Check on your cholesterol levels.
- Eat for wellness. Go for fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein.
- If you smoke, quit. Smoking causes problems with blood vessels.
- Move more. Exercise have a big influence on blood sugar.

Diabetic Retinopathy



In Search of Excellence