

Clinical Characteristics of Strep Throat

This table is adapted from the World Health Organization report on rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease. Its purpose is to distinguish between sore throats caused by strep bacteria and other causative agents such as viruses.

Some clinical characteristics of strep throat compared with those of a non-strep throat (usually viral infection):

Clinical characteristics	Strep throat	Other causative agents
Age	5-15 years (most common)	All ages
Mode of onset	Sudden	More gradual
Initial symptoms	Sore throat with pain while swallowing	Mild sore throat
Fever	High (usually higher than 38° C (100° F))	Not so high (usually lower than 38° C (100° F))
Appearance of the throat	Redness, hyperemia, edema, and enlargement of the tonsils with pus	Redness
Other signs	The lymph nodes (glands) at the angle of the jaw and the back of the neck may be large, firm, and tender	Cough, hoarseness, watery nasal secretion, and red eyes