

# Strep Test for Children

Strep throat is a sore throat that's caused by a type of bacteria.

If your child has symptoms of strep throat, the doctor may do a strep test.

It's a quick test that checks for the bacteria.

It can tell right away if your child has strep throat.

The test takes about a minute, and the results are usually ready in 10 to 15 minutes.

Here's how it's done.

Your child will tilt their head back and open their mouth wide.

The doctor examines your child's mouth and throat while pressing the tongue down with a flat stick.

The doctor then rubs a clean cotton swab on the back of the throat and the tonsils and over any sores or red areas— to collect bacteria for testing.

When the swab or stick touches the back of the throat, it can be a little uncomfortable.

And your child might gag a little.

But it's over quickly.

If the test is positive, it means strep bacteria were found, and your child has strep throat.

The doctor will recommend treatment, such as antibiotic medicine.

If the test is negative, your child probably doesn't have strep throat.

But... sometimes a child can have strep throat, even though the test was negative and no strep bacteria were found.

So another test, called a throat culture, may be done to find out for sure if your child has strep.

It takes a couple of days to get those results back.

Getting a test at the doctor's office can be a little scary, especially for younger kids.

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So if your child seems nervous, it might help to remind them that the test doesn't take long, and it doesn't hurt.

And remember, if you or your child has any questions, you can always ask your child's doctor.