

Throat pain

November is a time of colds and flu. November also tends to be dull and damp. Add the dryness of heated rooms and the **spread** of bacteria and viruses is a certainty. One of the first symptoms of a cold is the pain in the throat.

Sore throat is also called **pharyngitis**. The throat includes the **tonsils**, oesophagus, larynx or voice box, epiglottis, **vocal cords**, and trachea or windpipe. All or any of these areas may be affected. There are various viral and bacterial causes of sore throat: the common cold, flu, **mononucleosis** or **strep throat** caused by the streptococcus pyogenes bacterium, which is the main bacterial cause of throat infections.

Pharmacy customer (with a very hoarse voice): Hallo.

PTA: Oh! Das klingt gar nicht gut!

Sorry, I don't speak German.

No problem! How may I help you?

As you've noticed I'm very hoarse. Talking for any longer than five minutes is terrible.

I see, but before I can recommend any medication or **remedies**, I need to know about your symptoms, you know how long you've had them, if you have fever, that type of thing.

Okay.

How long have you had the **hoarseness**?

Just about a day or so.

Do you have a temperature?

No, not really. Why?

Well, if you had a temperature higher than 38.3 °C, I'd recommend that you go to your doctor immediately. And there's not a lump in your throat?

No, not that I've noticed.

What about earache or blood in your **phlegm**?

No, to both.

Do you have difficulty swallowing?

Just a little, but it's more the hoarseness when I have to talk.

And you don't have heartburn, you know acid reflux?

No, I have never had heartburn.

So, you are hoarse and I think that your may also be very dry throat.

Certainly. So, what can you give me to help?

Firstly, it's important to get plenty of fluids. Herbal tea, such as **sage**

is gentle and effective at **alleviating** the symptoms. We have **medicinal sage tea** here. It's also a good idea to suck **lozenges** to increase **saliva flow** and help keep the throat moist.

Okay, I'll try that. Is there anything else?

Yes, if your sore throat is accompanied by aches, it is a good idea to take an **anti-inflammatory** such as aspirin, ibuprofen or paracetamol. They will help with the pain accompanied by the sore throat.

Paracetamol, that's what we call acetaminophen in the US, isn't it?

Yes, it is. You might also consider using nasal spray. You see, the fact that your throat is dry would indicate that you are breathing through your mouth.

Now that you say it, yes, I am having problems with my nasal passages!

That's why a decongestant will help. On the one hand it helps to free the blocked airways, and on the other hand it helps to prevent post nasal drip, which is a major cause of sore throats and coughs. Another remedy is to gargle with a salt and warm water solution a few times a day.

Okay! I'll try all these to see if anything helps. Thank you.

You're welcome, goodbye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

sore throat	Halsentzündung
sprea	Verbreitung
pharyngitis	Rachenentzündung
tonsils	Mandeln
vocal cords	Stimmbänder
mononucleosis	Pfeiffersches Drüsenfieber
strep throat	Halsentzündung
hoarse	heiser
remedies	Heilmittel
hoarseness	Heiserkeit
phlegm	Schleim
heartburn	Sodbrennen
sage	Salbei
alleviating	lindern
medicinal tea	Arzneitee, Heiltee
lozenges	Lutschtabletten
saliva flow	Speichelfluss
anti-inflammatory	Entzündungshemmer