

SORE THROAT RELIEF FOR CHILDREN

WITH DIFFLAM SPRAY



Sore throats are common in children, but treatment selection for younger age groups can be challenging. Pharmacists may need to consider factors such as age suitability, dosing requirements, ease of administration and the needs of both the child and parent. Research has shown that customers prioritise products that help relieve pain and reduce inflammation.¹ For users of spray formulations, clinical effectiveness is also an important consideration.¹

Sore throat in children is often associated with a high temperature and is usually due to a viral infection. If this is the case, they are likely to also have a runny nose, cough and earache.²

It is common for children to have five to eight colds a year on average. A dry sore throat may be noticeable for a day or two when the cold starts.³

If several people are unwell in the same household, this also suggests a viral infection, as these are easily spread. Viral infections tend to get better on their own and do not

need treatment with antibiotics. So sore throat is, in the main, a self-limiting condition, with symptoms clearing up within three days in 40% of people and within one week in 85% of people.⁴

The symptoms – which could include a painful throat, especially when swallowing, a mild cough, and swollen neck glands – are similar in children and adults, but children can also get a high temperature and appear less active.⁵

Another common cause of sore throat in children is tonsillitis. This is usually viral but can also be due to a bacterial infection such as strep throat, caused by the *Streptococcus* bacterium.⁶ Strep throat is more common in children aged 5 to 15.⁴

Strep throat typically accounts for less than a third of cases of acute sore throat. The FeverPAIN criteria give a useful way to determine the likelihood of Strep throat.⁷

PHARMACY FIRST FOR SORE THROAT⁷



Children aged five years and older with acute sore throat may be eligible for treatment through the Pharmacy First service.⁷ Along with other assessments, the FeverPAIN scoring system is used to determine the severity of symptoms.



Fever
(over 38°C)



Purulence
(pus)



First Attendance
within 3 days after
onset of symptoms



Severely Inflamed
tonsils



No cough or cold
symptoms

One point is scored for each sign that is present and the total used to give the child's FeverPAIN score, with increasing scores reflecting the severity and likelihood of a bacterial infection.⁷ Pharmacists will work through the Pharmacy First pathway, and for those eligible, antibiotics may be considered and self-care advice and OTC treatment for symptom relief will be recommended.



TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS IN YOUNGER CHILDREN



Spray vs lozenge

Lozenges can pose a choking hazard for younger children, and a number of well-known brands are not suitable for children aged 6-12. The same age restriction applies to some throat sprays.

Spray vs oral formulation

Liquid analgesic formulations, including paracetamol and ibuprofen, are a mainstay of treatment for children aged 1-5 years, although they are recommended less frequently for those aged over 6.⁸ However, Benzylamine can be used in infants and children weighing over 4 kg and can be applied directly to the site of pain and inflammation.⁹ A spray formulation may also be preferable for some parents who would prefer to use a locally acting product rather than an oral formulation such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, due to its reduced systemic absorption.

Comparison of common OTC active ingredients for sore throat

	Benzylamine⁹	Lidocaine¹⁰	Flurbiprofen¹¹
Primary effect	Anti-inflammatory, local analgesic and anaesthetic	Anaesthetic	Anti-inflammatory, analgesic and antipyretic
Age suitability	From 4 kg body weight (Spray)	Over 12 years	Over 18 years

TREATMENT OPTIONS CAN BE LIMITED IN YOUNGER CHILDREN

Research among pharmacists identified suitability, dosing and administration as important considerations when recommending products for this age group.⁸

A SOLUTION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH SORE THROAT

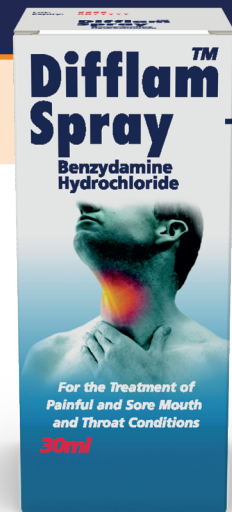
Diffiam Spray is well placed to address pharmacists' concerns about treatment options. Often children's throat sprays only work to numb the pain. **Diffiam is different, treating the underlying inflammation directly.** Diffiam Spray is a fast-acting, convenient formulation that works directly at the site of inflammation. It can easily be administered by parents using the recommended dosing schedule for children below:⁹

Children under 6 years of age – spray 1 puff for every 4 kg body weight, up to a maximum of 4 puffs, to the sore area every 1½ to 3 hours.

Child weight	Dose
4 kg	1 spray
8 kg	2 sprays
12 kg	3 sprays
≥16 kg	4 sprays (max)

Children 6-12 years of age – spray 4 puffs to the sore area every 1½ to 3 hours.

Diffiam Spray can also be used to treat sore throats in older children and adults.



Diffiam oromucosal spray (P) contains 0.15% w/v benzylamine hydrochloride

TRIPLE ACTION SUPPORT FOR SORE THROATS



The active ingredient in Diffiam Spray is benzylamine. It works in three ways:

- Analgesic**
To quickly relieve pain and soothe a sore throat effectively
- Anti-inflammatory**
Reducing inflammation and redness of the sore area
- Anaesthetic**
Reducing pain by gently numbing the area

The ability of benzylamine to concentrate in inflamed tissues, with low systemic exposure, is a key advantage that limits potential systemic side effects.¹²

CASE STUDY



4-year-old Arthur has a mild sore throat. He is too young for treatment through the Pharmacy First service. His mother says he is more irritable and in some discomfort, and he needs something to help relieve the inflammation and pain of his sore throat. She has given Arthur a children's oral liquid analgesic which has provided some relief, but she wants to know if there are other more targeted options. She is aware that quite a few products are not suitable for children under six years. After working through the WWHAM questions, you suggest she try a throat spray such as Diffiam. You explain it is suitable for children and infants, provided they weigh over 4 kg. It is easy to use and provides targeted relief to the site of the pain. Arthur's mum tells you that he is 16.3kg, therefore you advise her to use one puff of spray per 4 kg body weight, up to a maximum of 4 puffs, every 1½–3 hours.⁹

You also offer some self-care advice: The child should be kept hydrated by encouraging plenty of fluids^{4,13} • Let the child rest^{5,6} • Offer cool, soft foods⁵ • Avoid exposing the child to irritants⁵ (e.g. avoid smoky areas) • Sucking ice cubes or ice lollies might help, but do not give him anything small and hard to suck due to a risk of choking in young children.

You advise Arthur's mother to keep an eye on him and seek medical advice if he:¹³ Is having difficulty opening his mouth • Is having breathing problems, such as rapid breathing, shortness of breath or laboured breathing (drawing in of muscles below the lower ribs when he breathes in) • Seems dehydrated (sunken eyes, drowsy or no urine passed for 12 hours) • Is becoming drowsy or irritable (unable to settle with toys, TV, food or picking up) – especially if he remains drowsy or irritable despite his fever coming down • Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain • Continues to have a fever of 38°C or above for more than 5 days • Is getting worse or if she is worried.

References

1. UK Diffiam Customer Journey Research May 2022, Toluna (Data on file) 2. NHS Healthier Together. Child 5-11 Years: Sore Throat. Available at: <https://www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk/child-under-12-years/sore-throat> 3. NHS. Colds, coughs and ear infections in children. May 2025. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/colds-coughs-and-ear-infections-in-children/> 4. NICE CKS. Sore throat – acute. May 2026. Available at: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/topics/sore-throat-acute/> 5. NHS. Sore throat. April 2024. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/sore-throat/> 6. NHS. Tonsillitis. March 2024. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tonsillitis/> 7. NHS England. Pharmacy First Clinical Pathways. September 2025. Available at: https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/PRN00936_i_pharmacy-first-clinical-pathways-version-2.5.pdf 8. Diffiam Pharmacist Survey. April 2026. CIG Research (Data on file) 9. Diffiam 0.15% Spray Patient Information Leaflet. 2025. Available at: <https://mhrproducts4853.blob.core.windows.net/docs/57e24a1a2f6371f261265bca1b7e800ecf78d2d3> 10. SmPC. Boots Severe Sore Throat Relief 2% w/v Oromucosal Spray. 2025. Available at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/5538/smcp> 11. SmPC. Strefen Eucalyptus and Manuka Honey Flavour 8.75mg Lozenges. 2025. Available at: <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/product/15831/smcp> 12. Passali D, et al. International Delphi-based consensus on the appropriate use and effect of Benzylamine hydrochloride in the treatment of sore throat. BMC Prim Care. 2022 Nov 23;23(1):296. doi: 10.1186/s12875-022-01901-w. 13. NHS Healthier Together. Child 5-11 Years: Sore Throat. Available at: <https://www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk/child-under-12-years/sore-throat> Online references last accessed September 2026

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