

# Breastfeeding and Medication



## Sore throats, Tonsillitis and Breastfeeding

Most of us can identify with the pain of a sore throat when having symptoms of a cold, although sore throats can also manifest as tonsillitis which is inflammation of the tonsils, two oval-shaped pads of tissue at the back of the throat — one tonsil on each side. Signs and symptoms of tonsillitis include swollen tonsils, sore throat, difficulty swallowing and tender lymph nodes on the sides of the neck.

Sore throats can be soothed by sucking anything which has a demulcent effect including sipping glycerine, honey and lemon drinks, raisins, cool drinks or ice cream. Sucking over the counter lozenges and using sore throat sprays. sprays e.g. Difflam™, Vick Chloraseptic™, Own Brands and lozenges which may include a local anaesthetic or an anti-inflammatory eg Strepsils™, Dequadin™ and Dequacaine™, Jackson's lozenge™, glycerine and honey pastilles, Strefen™

The leaflets within packaging may include wording such as “ask your GP or pharmacist before using this product if you are breastfeeding”. This is due to licence application rather than risk.

The main symptoms of tonsillitis in children and adults are:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tonsillitis/>

- a sore throat
- problems swallowing
- a high temperature
- coughing
- a headache
- feeling and being sick
- earache
- feeling tired

Sometimes the symptoms can be more severe and include:

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[www.breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk](http://www.breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk)

June 2024 *The information on this sheet is based upon my professional experience as a pharmacist with a specialised interest in the safety of drugs in breastmilk, supported by evidence from expert sources. However, I cannot take responsibility for the prescription of medication which remains with the healthcare professionals involved. I am happy to discuss the evidence by email [wendy@breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk](mailto:wendy@breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk)*

- swollen, painful glands in your neck
- pus-filled spots or white patches on your tonsils
- bad breath

Tonsillitis can last a few days. Treatment To help treat the symptoms include getting plenty of rest (not always easy with children around) and the over the counter remedies listed above. If you continue to have a raised temperature you can consult a local pharmacist via the walk in scheme <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/pharmacy-first/> rather than waiting to see a GP.

The normal antibiotic for a non penicillin allergic mother is penicillin V tablets which are compatible with breastfeeding. Other antibiotics are available for penicillin allergic people. <https://breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk/fact-sheet/antibiotics-and-breastfeeding>

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