

Quinsy (peritonsillar abscess)



What is quinsy?

The tonsils are small lumps of tissue guarding both sides of the throat.

Sometimes an infection of the tonsils may spread beyond the tonsils into the surrounding tissues (peritonsillar tissues) and cause swelling and inflammation of these tissues. This may result in a collection of pus, which is called a peritonsillar abscess or quinsy, usually on one side.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Fever, sore throat and difficulty in swallowing.
- Difficulty in opening the mouth.
- Difficulty in speaking.
- Tender neck glands.
- Bad breath.

What is the treatment for quinsy?

Treatment for this condition may include:

- Antibiotic therapy for infection.
- Drainage of the abscess by a doctor if required. If a doctor has drained the quinsy, you may find that chewing gum will help the drainage and relieve discomfort.
- Regular pain relief – try taking a pain medication half an hour to an hour before your meal.
- Maintain a good fluid and diet intake. A healthy diet will speed your recovery.
- Adequate bed rest is important but maintain light activities.
- Activity levels can increase when you begin to feel better.
- Use a mouth gargle regularly, especially after food.
- Do not smoke.
- Check with your doctor about drinking alcohol.
- Contact your doctor again if your condition does not improve.

Recurrent tonsillitis and/or a peritonsillar abscess may warrant a tonsillectomy (surgical removal of the tonsils). This requires further discussion with your doctor.

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