University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

Quinsy

Patient information

What is quinsy?

A quinsy (peritonsillar abscess) is a pus-filled pocket that forms near one of your tonsils. It's usually a complication of tonsillitis, but this isn't always the case. It is often caused by the same bacteria that cause strep throat.

Signs and symptoms

- Sore throat
- Fever/ chills
- Swelling of your face and neck
- Head or earaches
- Drooling and difficulty swallowing
- Voice changes or a tonsil that's pushing your uvula to one side.

Treatment

During your stay in the ear, nose and throat, same day emergency clinic (ENT SDEC) you will be seen by an advanced clinical practitioner (ACP).

You will have blood tests to check your infection markers (the level on infection showing in your blood).

You may also be given some intravenous antibiotics (via a cannula into a vein), fluids, or steroids to reduce the inflammation and hydrate you.

The abscess may need draining. A numbing spray and local anaesthetic will be used first. Then a puncture (small hole) with a needle and syringe is made to identify the abscess. It may need opening with a scalpel to encourage free drainage. This procedure is usually completed by an advanced clinical practitioner or a doctor.

We will aim to get you home on the same day; however, you may need admitting for further treatment.

Depending on a number of factors, you may need an outpatient follow-up appointment within 2-3 months, this will be discussed on discharge.

Advice for discharge

- If antibiotics are provided, you must complete the full course to prevent a further infection. You will also be advised on pain relief to take.
- Please avoid drinking alcohol and smoking.
- It is very important that you eat as normal and drink plenty.
- You will be advised to rest for around a week. Please inform the nurse if you need a sick note.
- If you are a smoker, now is the perfect time to consider giving up or reducing the amount you smoke, Your GP can provide you with advice as required.
- Please remember that unless told otherwise, your first contact in the community is your GP.
- If you get worse and need to be seen, please contact the ENT team on **07386 682764** (Mon- Fri, 8am-8pm) or attend the emergency department out of hours.

Attend the emergency department immediately if you have difficulty breathing.

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