

# INFECTIONS

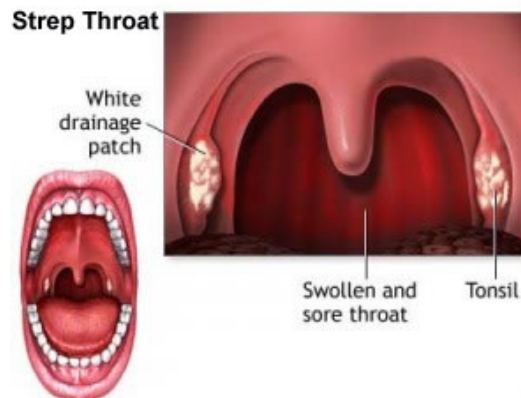
By  
David L. Duffy MD

Modern Medicine's view of infections can be illustrated by the cold sore, strep throat, and boil. The cold sore is caused by the virus Herpes Simplex. The virus lives inside the skin cell in a dormant state. Something triggers it to grow. It uses the genetic equipment of the cell to replicate viruses. When the viruses fill the cell, the cell bursts and the viruses spread. They enter other cells and continue to reproduce. Eventually the immune system deploys antibodies against the virus and the infection is stopped.



The "cold sore" has a collection of fluid filled bubbles ("vesicles"). They break open and leak out. As it dries up there forms a crust. Eventually the crust slough off and the cold sore heals. The entire process may take several days. There is a medicine called acyclovir which comes in a cream or ointment. It goes into the viral DNA and blocks the enzyme which controls DNA replication. A small tube of the medicine costs about \$70 (USD).

When a person gets a "sore throat" it usually starts as a viral infection. The throat gets itchy and sore. The irritation may trigger a cough. The bacterium *Streptococcus pyogenes* enters the scene and starts growing in the throat. A white or yellow layer grows on the surface of the throat particularly on the tonsils. The person experiences fever. The tonsils swell up. It is hard to swallow. Lymph nodes in the neck begin to swell and are tender. The germs continue to grow. The person goes to the doctor. A culture is taken and the doctor prescribes an antibiotic such as penicillin. A 10-day course of penicillin VK 250 mg four times a day is administered. The price of the antibiotic is about \$20 (USD).



Strep throat is an infection of the pharynx caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pyogenes*. The pharynx is the part of the throat between the tonsils and the larynx, or voice box.

A boil or "carbuncle" is an infection of the skin in which the bacterium *Staphylococcus aureus* grows. It may enter through a hair or scratch. Persons with diabetes have a greater risk of getting this infection because sugar in the sweat collects on the skin surface. As the germ replicates the body sends white blood cells to fight the infection. The immune system orchestrates an inflammation in which white blood cells enter the scene and surround the germs. Macrophages swallow the germs and kill them with something like hydrogen peroxide. Enzymes dissolve tissue.

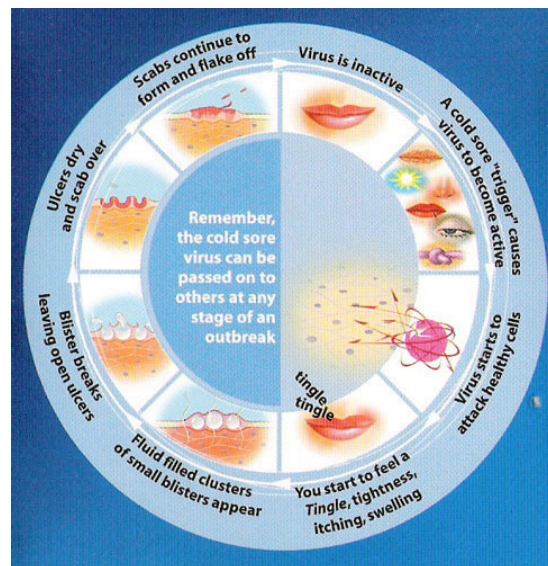
The "boil" consists of a pocket of pus containing dead germs, white blood cells, and digested material. At first the boil is red, swollen, and tender. When it comes to a head, a hole in the skin develops and the pus drains out. When the patient sees the doctor he is given 10 days of antibiotic therapy, such as cephalexin 500 mg 4 times a day. The cost is approximately \$23 (USD).

Infections are viewed as the invasion of pathogenic viruses and bacteria which trigger a defense by the immune system. The treatment consists of administering antibiotics to slow down or kill the germs.

Doctors prescribe many antibiotics. If the germs are resistant they give newer more expensive drugs.

What is wrong with this picture of infections? In a forest germs and insects play a role in decomposing dead trees and leaves and producing topsoil. Germs play a similar role in the body.

Let us now look at the function germs serve and how the immune system cleans the body. In my experience, cold sores are triggered when I have consumed and excess of sweets. A cold sore breaks out. It runs its course for about a week. In the process the viruses grow and trigger an eruption in which waste is extruded into the skin. The virus is permitted to grow. The cold sores usually occur in the same place. The virus stays quietly in the cells and is activated under certain conditions. The immune system orchestrates and extrusion of material through the surface of the skin.



Similarly, Streptococcal and Staphylococcal germs are ubiquitous. When the tonsils collect a certain amount of waste material the streptococcal germs feed off the waste. When the waste has been consumed by the germs and the infection has run its course, the person coughs up the dead germs and pus. The debris is loosened and peels off the throat and the infection is resolved.

Taking antibiotics can kill off the germs and cut short the cleansing process. If the waste is still there the infection may come back later of germs resistant to the antibiotic can grow and the infection may get worse and spread.

When you have a boil, you apply moist heat several times a day. The boil comes to a head and extrudes pus. It heals from the inside out. Just like the cold sore or strep throat the boil has caused a load of waste to be extruded.

Sometimes a small infection can be handled without antibiotics. Antibiotics are helpful to contain the infection and prevent it from spreading. You do not want a strep throat to progress to pneumonia. Nor do you want the boil to spread throughout the skin (cellulitis), in the blood stream (sepsis) or to the heart (endocarditis).



It is my recommendation that whenever you have an infection, you ask what the body wants to do. Rest is important. Fasting withholds foods which may contribute to the waste and feed the germs. Fasting allows the kidneys and liver to eliminate waste. It is important for the immune system to be fully active.

When you have an infection and you keep going, do exercise, or go without sleep, the immune system is compromised and the infection is prolonged. Energy needed by the immune system is diverted into other activities and the healing process can be postponed. This happens with recurrent sore throats, ear infections, and chronic bronchitis. There is an ongoing supply of waste for the germs to feed again.

Many patients receive antibiotics for viral infections. Many take antibiotics and go on their merry way with a normal schedule, assuming that the antibiotics will take care of the infection.

Once I was visiting the medical clinic at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. A resident presented the following case: A woman came for her third visit for a bronchitis infection that had not gotten better. The resident was planning to give her a 3<sup>rd</sup> course of antibiotics. When I spoke with the patient I asked what she had done to get better. She said she had done what the doctors had told her to do. I asked her again what she had done to help herself get better. She said that she was a legal secretary by day. She was attending night school. Over the 6 weeks of her illness she continued her normal schedule. She had averaged 4-5 hours of sleep per night during her illness.

To prevent infections I recommend voluntarily fasting one day a week. Do a deep cleansing. Stay away from excess sweets and animal proteins. Overuse of junk food and dairy products leads the body to make excess mucus. Overproduction of mucus in the nose is called allergic rhinitis. Excess mucus in the lungs is manifested as asthma.



When you get sick, welcome the illness and cooperate with nature. Be happy that the immune system is performing a cleanup campaign. When necessary you may take antibiotics but this is a small part of the healing process. Allow yourself to be sick. Allow yourself to feel sick. Catch up on your sleep. Allow the healing crisis to occur. As you get better the body eliminates the waste. Your appetite picks up again. Your energy returns. The speed of healing depends on what your body is trying to accomplish. A college student who has spent a year of eating junk food and getting along on little sleep will come home and get very sick. He is exhausted. The "infection" is very bad, Why? It is because the body is exhausted and is behind in cleaning up. It may take a month to recover. It is not the germ which determines the duration of the infection. It is the amount of waste that needs to come out.

It is my hope that patients will take care of themselves more intelligently. It is my hope that physicians will stop over-prescribing antibiotics and will help patients cooperate more with nature. Infections are a normal part of nature. The body builds up tissue. Viruses and bacteria feed upon and decompose waste material. The immune system serves as the building superintendent. A clean building should not be infested with roaches and mice. A clean body should not invite viruses and bacteria to sign a lease and move in.

When we eat properly and live within the boundaries set up by our bodies we can stay in metabolic balance and minimize infections.

Hippocrates is quoted as having said in circa 400 BCE: "Leave your drugs in the chemist's pot if you can heal the patient with food."

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