

Sore throat?

FREE checks for eligible people aged 3–35 years at participating pharmacies.



What is a sore throat check?

It is a swab test of the throat to see if the Streptococcus bacteria is causing the sore throat, sometimes called strep throat.

Why is it important to get a sore throat checked?

Flu and cold viruses can also cause sore throats, so the swab test tells you when strep throat is the cause.

If you are at a higher risk of developing rheumatic fever, you must check a sore throat early and get treatment for strep throat with antibiotics. Without treatment, strep throat can cause rheumatic fever, which can damage your heart.

You are at higher risk of rheumatic fever if:

- you have had rheumatic fever before
- someone in your family or household has had rheumatic fever
- you are of Māori or Pacific Peoples ethnicity
- you live closely with many people (e.g. more than 2 people sharing a sleeping room).

If you are not at higher risk, rheumatic fever is extremely unlikely for you, even if you have strep throat, so you don't need a swab test.

If you feel very unwell, have a high fever, or just have questions, seek advice from your doctor or Healthline phone 0800 611 116, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

How much does the check cost?

For a limited time, the sore throat check is **FREE** at participating pharmacies in Counties Manukau and West Auckland.

How long is the FREE sore throat check available?

Now until 15 September 2024.

Who can get a FREE sore throat check?

People aged 3 to 35 years old who are at high risk of rheumatic fever are eligible for a FREE check.

People who are outside of this group can still get a sore throat check at their local hauora Māori provider, Pacific health clinic or doctors. Charges may apply.

Do we need to book for a FREE sore throat check?

No, just head to one of the pharmacies and ask for a check.

Get a **FREE** check now at these local pharmacies:

- Clendon Pharmacy - **Weymouth**
- Counties Care Pharmacy - **Papakura**
- Southmall Pharmacy - **Manurewa**
- Unichem Browns Road - **Wiri**
- Unichem Mangere - **Mangere**
- Unichem Medi-Centre - **Lincoln Road**
- Chemist Warehouse - **Henderson**
- Unichem Bairds Road Pharmacy - **Otara**

About the sore throat check

Who does the check?

A specially trained pharmacist will do the check. They can answer any questions you have at any time.

How long does the check take?

The sore throat check only takes a **few minutes** and the pharmacist will let you know if any treatment or follow-up with a doctor is needed.

What happens during the check?

The test is done in a private area at the pharmacy.

The pharmacist will gently take a swab of the sore throat using a soft cotton swab. They will lightly brush over the back of the throat, around the tonsils, and over any red or sore areas to collect a sample.

Does the test hurt?

The test may be a little uncomfortable and the swabbing may briefly cause slight pain.

What happens with the swab sample?

The sample goes to the laboratory to be tested to see if the sore throat is Streptococcus, commonly known as strep throat.

The pharmacist will get in touch with you 3 or 4 working days after the test to let you know the results and to discuss next steps and treatment.

What if medicine is needed? Do I need to go to the doctor?

In some cases, antibiotics are needed to treat the infection. If you need antibiotics after your throat check, the pharmacist will supply them to you. There will be no cost for the antibiotics.



Need more help?

You can call **Healthline** for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **0800 611 116**.

Visit www.pumanawa.org.nz/resources-for-whānau

Talk to your pharmacist, hauora Māori provider, Pacific health clinic or doctor.