

**Test Your Knowledge**

**Facts And Fiction About Strep Throat**

Sore throats account for up to 40 million doctor visits each year. In most cases, they are just another bit of discomfort to be endured with the common cold - and just as incurable, because the same virus is to blame. But one out of 10 sore throats is caused by bacteria called streptococci - or strep for short.

In late winter and early spring, the strep toll may be as high as six or seven out of ten sore throats. We have all come to fear strep because it can cause rheumatic fever and other serious complications. But how much do you really know about strep throat? Test your knowledge with this quiz.

**Q:** How can I tell if I have strep throat?

**A:** You can't. Even a physician may have difficulty making a correct diagnosis without a labora-

tory test.

**Q:** Are there certain tell-tale symptoms that are seen commonly with strep throat?

**A:** Yes. They include beefy red throat, swollen lymph nodes, fever, and the absence of other cold symptoms, like runny nose. But these same symptoms may be seen with other diseases.

**Q:** True or false: Strep throat is a childhood disease.

**A:** False. Although youngsters between the ages of five and 15 are at highest risk, anyone can get strep throat.

**Q:** How long does it take before the doctor gets laboratory results back?

**A:** If your doctor's office has the Culturette 10-minute Group A Strep ID test, it's a matter of minutes. The traditional throat culture takes 24 to 48 hours.

**Q:** Are strep throat symptoms the same in babies and adults?

**A:** No. Babies and toddlers often have more nausea and vomiting, while adults suffer from painful swallowing.

**Q:** Is there a "strep season"?

**A:** Yes. In fact there are two: early fall and the late winter-early spring months.

If you did well on the quiz, you know that there is

good news and bad news about strep. The bad news is that strep can be serious and is difficult to diagnose. The good news is that the simple 10-minute diagnostic test from Marion Laboratories is becoming a new weapon in the fight against strep. Because lab results are immediately available, treatment can begin on the spot and the patient will usually stop being contagious within 24 hours.

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