

TONSILLITIS

The tonsils are small “**Lymph nodes**” in the back of the throat. “**Tonsillitis**” is a term used to describe conditions when the tonsils are inflamed or infected. In the normal pet they function to kill germs that enter the body through the mouth. Sometimes the tonsils become chronically infected leading to recurrent sore throats.

Most cases of sore throat and tonsillitis occur as a result of temperature changes, such as going from inside the house to outside and back.

It is about 10 degrees colder on the floor of your house than at eye level. This means if you keep the thermostat set at 68 degrees in the house, it’s probably about 58 degrees on the floor. If the dog goes out and becomes damp on its feet or abdomen, this may cause chilling, when it is brought back into the house.

You might also consider a sweater for the dog for wintertime trips outside the house.

The opposite occurs many times in the summer months with the dog getting hot outside, and then being chilled in the house with air conditioning.

The mouth of dogs and cats normally contains many types of bacteria. These bacteria do **NOT** cause any problem, until the pet is stressed in some way, allowing the bacteria to multiply.

Since most cases of tonsillitis in dogs are bacterial (usually streptococcus), antibiotics are routinely used in treatment.

Human sore throats are usually caused by a virus, and therefore antibiotics are not often used.

Many cases of recurring tonsillitis are due to a persistent bacterial infection in the tonsil area. Many of these cases require a tonsillectomy to solve the problem. Since the tonsils in a “normal” animal help fight disease, we do **NOT** recommend removal, except in chronic cases which seem to flare up several times a year.

Tonsillitis may spread among your pets, and occasionally to man, but this is not generally a problem.

Pets with tonsillitis often have a fever, eat poorly, swallow with difficulty, retch up white frothy mucus, or have a mucus, jelly-like bowel movement.