Most sore throats are caused by viral agents.²

Clinical findings alone do not adequately distinguish Strep vs. Non-Strep pharyngitis.³

BUT, prominent rhinorrhea, cough, hoarseness, conjuntivitis, or diarrhea suggest a VIRAL etiology. ⁴

Antigen tests (rapid Strep kits) or culture should be positive before beginning antibiotic treatment.

Experts suggest confirming negative results on antigen tests with culture.⁵

Remember that most cases with clinical signs of strep, like exudate and adenopathy, are viral.

Experts discourage treatment pending culture results⁵-⁶, but if you do...

- Make sure to stop antibiotics when culture is negative.
- Discourage parents from saving antibiotics.

If an antibiotic is prescribed:

- Use a penicillin as treatment for group A strep.⁷

NO group A strep are resistant to penicillin. Treatment is 90% effective at elimination of strep, and may be higher in the prevention of acute rheumatic fever (ARF). Carriers are at very low risk for both ARF and spreading infection.⁷

- Use erythromycin if penicillin allergic.

References