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, conjunctivitis, 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 cephalosporin, clindamycin, azithromycin, or clarithromycin if penicillin allergic.

References