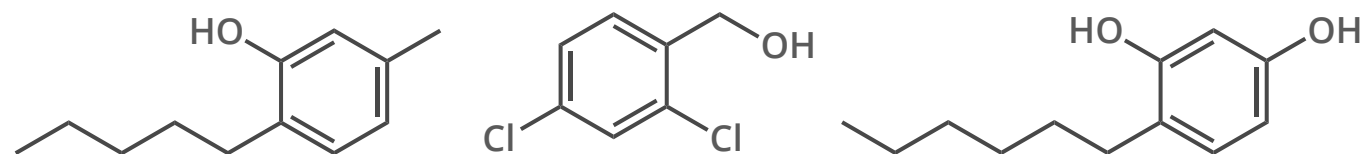


THE CHEMISTRY OF THROAT LOZENGES

Throat lozenges are commonly used to provide relief from a sore throat. This graphic takes a look at some of the compounds used, and how they exert their effects.

COMBATTING SORE THROATS

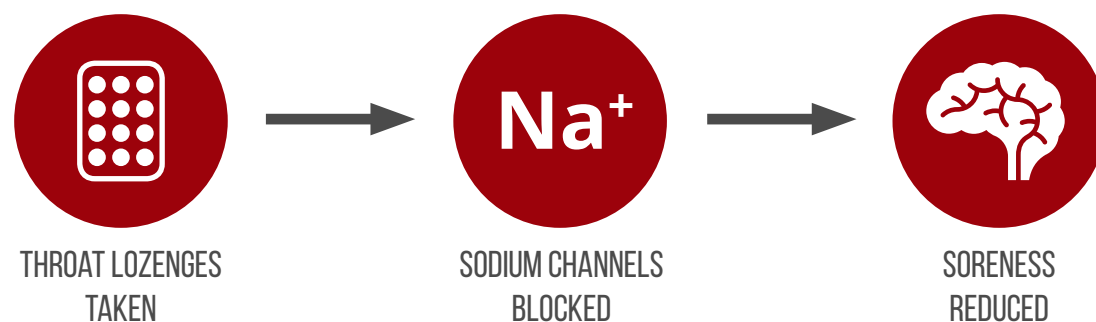


LEFT TO RIGHT: AMYLMETACRESOL, DICHLOROBENZYL ALCOHOL, & HEXYLRESORCINOL

Many lozenges for sore throats contain either amylmetacresol or dichlorobenzyl alcohol - or both compounds in combination. They have an antiseptic effect, and have been shown to act on bacterial (and even some viral) infections. Hexylresorcinol, used in some lozenges, also has a mild anaesthetic effect. Though they are effective in relieving the symptoms of sore throats, there is mixed evidence for them reducing the duration of infection.



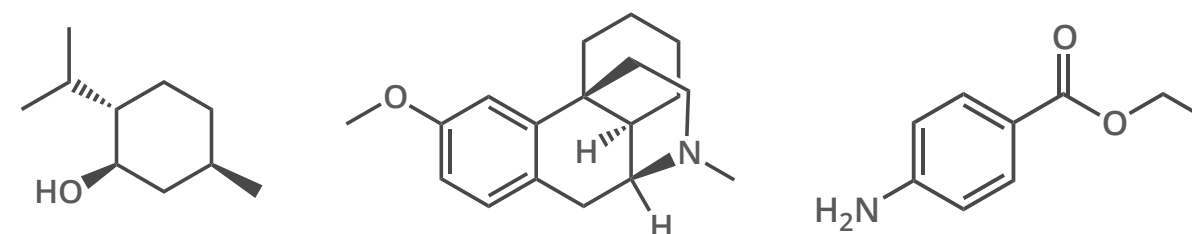
HOW DO LOZENGES COMBAT SORE THROATS?



As well as their antiseptic effects, it's been postulated that all three of the compounds mentioned above can bind to and block sodium channels, stopping pain signals reaching the brain. This leads to them having an anaesthetic-like effect, comparable to the potency of some anaesthetic compounds.

OTHER COMPOUNDS

Other compounds can also be included in lozenges. Flavouring agents are used to make them palatable; sometimes menthol is used for this purpose as it can also impart a 'cooling' effect, as well as having anaesthetic properties of its own. Compounds with decongestant and anti-coughing effects can also be included in the formulations.



LEFT TO RIGHT: MENTHOL, DEXTROMETHORPHAN (COUGH SUPPRESSANT), & BENZOCAINE (ANAESTHETIC)

