



Hunterdon County Department of Health



Public Health
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What is Streptococcus Group A (GAS) & Scarlet Fever?

Streptococcus Group A (GAS-non invasive) is called strep throat and is caused by a bacteria found in the throat and on the skin. Illness is common in younger children and symptoms of strep throat usually appear 2-5 days after being exposed. Most infections are mild or symptoms may not be present. Some strains of strep throat may lead to scarlet fever (strep throat with inflamed red sandpaper like rash on the throat or other part of the body). If left untreated illness can lead to serious complications.

What are the symptoms of Streptococcus Group A & Scarlet Fever?

- Sore throat
- Fever
- Tender swollen glands in neck
- White or yellow patches in throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting
- **Scarlet fever-inflamed red sandpaper like rash on the throat & other parts of the body**

How does Streptococcus Group A & Scarlet Fever spread?

- Direct contact with respiratory droplets/mucus from the nose or throat
- Indirect contact with secretions from infected person such as sharing toothbrushes
- If there is a rash, direct contact of infected sores or wounds on skin

Individuals with strep throat & scarlet fever are contagious from the moment they are ill until after they recover. Generally, people taking antibiotics for 24 hours will no longer be able to spread the illness but individuals must take antibiotics as directed by the physician and finish their medication even if they start feeling better.

What can be done to prevent Streptococcus Group A & Scarlet Fever?

- Wash your hands-use warm water & soap for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer (62% alcohol)
- Cough into your elbow or sleeve
- Do not share personal items like toothbrushes and towels
- Keep your distance from others who are sick
- **Stay home if you are sick from school or work for at least 24 hours after acute symptoms have resolved and antibiotics have been taken**
- Keep surfaces & objects clean by using cleaners such as bleach

How is Streptococcus Group A & Scarlet Fever diagnosed & treated?

Strep throat and scarlet fever are both diagnosed by a physician through a physical examination & the administration of a rapid test or culture test (throat swab). Your personal medical provider may prescribe antibiotics such as penicillin, amoxicillin or erythromycin. Take care of yourself by getting plenty of bed rest & drinking fluids. Over the counter medications can be used for other symptoms such as fever or pain. If symptoms are severe, new symptoms emerge or medication is not effective immediately contact a physician.

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