

December 13, 2006

Dear Key School Parents:

I continue to see children with fevers during the school day and receive reports of positive strep throat cultures so I am again enclosing information on strep and scarlet fever from the Health Department. Not all children get strep but if your child has had it in the past, your child may get it again.

A crowded environment such as a school makes it easier to spread such bacteria. One can get sick within 3 days after exposure, and once infected, you can pass the infection to others for up to 2 to 3 weeks even if you don't have symptoms. This makes it doubly important to keep children home when they complain of a sore throat with headache or tummy ache, and have a slight fever. Please do not give your child Tylenol or something similar and send them to school. Remember, your child will usually feel better after resting and sleeping all night only to have the fever rise with activity. The health department policy also states that a child needs to be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Most health care providers will do a rapid strep test, which only takes 10 or 20 minutes. If the result of the rapid test is negative, a follow-up culture to confirm the results, which takes 24 to 48 hours, is usually done. Strep is treated with antibiotics and is no longer contagious after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment but it is equally important to finish all the prescribed medicine.

Please familiarize yourself with the materials, reinforce hand washing with your children, especially before eating, watch for symptoms, and promptly get treatment.

I am available Monday through Friday if you have additional questions. My number is 202-243-1183.

Sincerely,



Joan P. Gagliardi, R.N.
School Nurse



David Landeryou
Principal

2 Enclosures



ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS
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Scarlet Fever Facts

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What is scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever is a disease caused by group A streptococci. The disease is most commonly associated with sore throat and is found in the mouth, nose, and throat of an infected person. The disease occurs most frequently in the late fall, winter and spring in the United States, presumably because of close person-to-person contact indoors and in schools.

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Who gets scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever and streptococcal sore throat can occur in people of all ages, but it is most frequent among school-age children.

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How is scarlet fever spread?

Scarlet fever usually results from direct contact with a person who has active streptococcal sore throat or through large respiratory droplets during coughing or sneezing.

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What are the symptoms of scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever is characterized by a sandpaper-like rash. The rash appears most often on the neck, chest, elbow, and groin, under the arms, and on the inner thighs. Typically, the scarlet fever rash does not involve the face, but there is flushing of the cheeks and paleness around the lips. High fever, nausea, and vomiting often accompany severe infections.

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How soon after infection will symptoms appear?

Scarlet fever may occur one to three days after exposure to an infected individual.

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Does past infection with scarlet fever make a person immune?

Immunity against the rash develops within a week after onset of scarlet fever and is usually permanent. Second attacks of scarlet fever are rare but may occur.



What is the treatment for scarlet fever?

Antibiotics such as penicillin, erythromycin, and cephalosporin are generally prescribed.



What can be done to prevent the spread of scarlet fever?

The most important means of controlling this disease is prompt identification and treatment of infections. It's important to cover one's mouth when coughing or sneezing and washing hands whenever possible. Children with streptococcal sore throat or skin infections should not return to school or day care until 24 hours after beginning antibiotic therapy, and until they have no fever. Close contact with other children should be avoided.

Preventive Health Services Administration

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Group A Streptococcal Infections Facts

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What is Group A Streptococcal Infection?

Group A streptococcal infection is a bacterium that is found in the mouth, nose, and throat of an infected person. The group A streptococcus produces a wide range of infections, including sore throat, skin infection, scarlet fever, kidney infections, and rheumatic fever.

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Who gets Group A Streptococcal Infection?

Group A streptococcal infection can occur at any age. Children from 3 to 15 are most commonly affected.

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How is group A streptococcal infection spread?

Group A streptococcal infection is primarily spread by direct contact with carriers. Transmission of respiratory secretions may occur from person-to-person contact such as kissing or holding hands, or through the projection of large droplets during coughing or sneezing.

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What are the symptoms of group A streptococcal infection?

The symptoms are skin rash, fever, chills, sore throat, painful swallowing, malaise, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting.

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How soon do symptoms appear?

The incubation period is short, usually one to three days before the appearance of symptoms.

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How long is a person able to spread group A streptococcal infections?

It can be spread until 24 hours after the carrier has been treated.

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How is group A streptococcal infection diagnosed?

In most cases, the disease is diagnosed through the recognition of symptoms and a throat culture.

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What is the treatment?

Penicillin is the drug of choice. Antibiotic therapy is aimed at eradicating streptococci from the respiratory tract.

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What can be done to prevent the spread of group A streptococcal infection?

- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Make sure your home is properly ventilated.
- Promote hand washing and other hygienic measures in the home.
- Scarlet Fever Facts

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Strep throat

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- Signs and symptoms
- Causes
- Risk factors
- When to seek medical advice
- Screening and diagnosis
- Complications
- Treatment
- Prevention
- Self-care

Introduction

A sore, scratchy throat is often the first sign that you're getting sick, and it's a common reason people see their doctors. Most sore throats, such as those that accompany a cold or the flu, are caused by viral infections and usually go away on their own within a few days.

Only a small portion of sore throats are the result of strep throat. But it's important to identify this bacterial throat infection for a number of reasons. Unlike other causes of sore throat, strep throat is treatable. The bacteria that cause strep throat respond quickly to antibiotics, and treatment stops the infection from spreading to other people.

If not treated, strep throat infections can sometimes cause complications such as rheumatic fever. Rheumatic fever can cause painful and inflamed joints and a rash, and can even result in damage to heart valves. Another potential complication of strep throat infections is kidney inflammation.

Strep throat is most common in children between the ages of 5 and 15, but it affects people of all ages. In addition to throat soreness, signs and symptoms typically include a fever plus tender and swollen lymph glands (nodes) in the neck. Younger children may also complain of abdominal pain.

If you or your child has signs or symptoms of strep throat, see your doctor. A quick test can result in diagnosis of strep throat in most cases, so that treatment can start promptly.

| [NEXT: Signs and symptoms](#) →

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When to seek medical advice

Call your doctor if you or your child has any of these signs and symptoms:

- A sore throat without a cold or runny nose
- A sore throat accompanied by tender, swollen lymph glands (nodes)
- A sore throat that lasts longer than 48 hours
- A fever higher than 103 F in older children, or any fever lasting longer than 48 hours
- Rash
- Joint pain
- Problems breathing or difficulty swallowing anything, including saliva

Call your doctor if you or your child doesn't feel better after taking antibiotics for 24 to 48 hours. Sometimes problems occur even after you or your child has finished treatment for strep throat.

Call your doctor if your child develops a fever — or has pain or swelling in the joints, shortness of breath or a rash — after a strep infection, even as long as three weeks after a strep infection. These can be indicators of rheumatic fever. Cola-colored urine after a strep throat infection may indicate kidney inflammation.

PREVIOUS | NEXT: Screening and diagnosis

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By Mayo Clinic Staff
Nov 3, 2006

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