

Group A Streptococcus Bacteria



- Group A Streptococcus (GAS) bacteria may be found in the nose and throats of people who have no symptoms and never become ill.
- For some individuals, the bacteria could cause illnesses such as strep throat, scarlet fever, and impetigo. These diseases are not invasive.
- In rare cases, a severe and life-threatening infection may occur. The bacteria may cause streptococcal toxic shock syndrome or necrotizing fasciitis (“flesh-eating disease”). These are called invasive GAS infections.
- There are times when people may be more likely to develop an illness because of Group A Streptococcus infection. If you have a health problem that weakens your immune system, you may be more likely to develop an infection.

Patients with invasive Group A Streptococcal infection will be placed in droplet and contact precautions (isolation) until antibiotics have been taken for at least 24 hours.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may include fever, sore throat, rash, sores on the skin, and flu-like illness.

In more invasive disease, the infection may cause extreme pain. For example, red and hot swollen skin, blisters and change in skin colour.

Spread

Bacteria spreads through direct contact with saliva and nasal discharge of an infected person. Also, by direct contact with infected sores or cuts.

Casual contact rarely results in infection.

Treatment and Prevention

- Good handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection.
- You are encouraged to wash your hands with soap and water. This is especially important after coughing, sneezing, wiping your nose, and before eating or preparing food.
- Cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid sharing food, drink, or eating utensils with others.
- Watch for signs of skin infection (e.g. redness, swelling, pain).
- If you think you have invasive Group A Streptococcal (GAS) infection, see a physician IMMEDIATELY.