



Strep Throat (Pharyngitis)

What is it?

While viruses are the most common cause of a sore throat, strep throat is a bacterial infection in the throat and tonsils caused by group A Streptococcus (group A strep). It is more common in children than adults and can cause a very painful sore throat.

Signs and symptoms?

Symptoms may occur 2 to 5 days after a person is exposed to group A strep. Swallowing becomes very painful, and the tonsils can become red and swollen and may have white patches or streaks of pus.

Other symptoms may include a headache, stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, especially in children. Sometimes children with Strep can develop a red rash all over the body that feels like sandpaper; this illness is called Scarlet Fever or "scarlatina".

How is it spread?

Group A strep live in the nose and throat and can easily spread to other people. It is important to know that some infected people (known as "carriers") do not have symptoms or seem sick. People who are infected spread the bacteria by coughing or sneezing droplets containing the bacteria into the air. People can get sick if they breathe in those droplets or touch something with droplets on it and then touch their mouth or nose, or if they drink from the same glass or eat from the same plate as the sick person.

A doctor can swab the throat and test for group A strep bacteria. If group A strep is causing the illness, antibiotics can be prescribed to treat the infection. Take the antibiotic exactly as prescribed, even if your child starts to feel better.

How to decrease the spread?

Covering the mouth when coughing and sneezing, and washing hands after wiping or blowing the nose, and after coughing and sneezing can help prevent group A strep bacteria from spreading.

Recommended Absence:

People with strep throat should stay home from school or day-care until they no longer have a fever AND have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

Strep throat is **not** reportable to Medical Officer of Health.

Resources:

www.aboutkidshealth.ca

www.caringforkids.cps.ca



Updated November 2022

