

## Streptococcal Sore Throat Information

Streptococcal (strep) throat infections are usually not serious; however, complications may develop if children do not receive proper treatment with antibiotics.

Strep throat is caused by group A Streptococcus bacteria. Strep throat is more common in children than in adults. Strep throat is easily spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes contaminated droplets into the air and another person inhales them. A person can also get infected from touching these secretions and then touching their mouth or nose. If not treated, strep infections can lead to scarlet fever, rheumatic fever, skin, bloodstream, ear infections, and pneumonia.

Some additional important facts about these infections are:

**Cause:** Streptococcus bacteria (Group A beta hemolytic strep)

**Symptoms:** Sudden onset of fever, sore throat, swollen glands, headache, abdominal pain. Nausea and vomiting may occur with severe cases. Scarlet fever is characterized by a bright red, rough textured (feels like sandpaper) rash that spreads all over the child's body. A red tongue ("strawberry" appearance) usually occurs. The rash appears most often on the neck, chest, in folds of the armpit, elbow, groin, and in the inner thigh. Later on, there may be peeling of the skin on the fingertips and toes. *Scarlet fever is not a complication of strep throat, but is the result of infection with a different strain of streptococcus.*

**Spread:** Person-to-person spread from nose and throat secretions of infected persons (those with and without symptoms).

**Incubation Period:** Short, usually 2 to 5 days

**Period of Communicability:** 10 to 21 days untreated, but only 24 hours once treatment is started

**Prevention/Control:** If your child does not appear well or develops a sore throat and other symptoms listed above, keep him or her home and call your physician.

**Diagnosis:** Confirmed by identification of strep in the throat, either by throat culture or by using a rapid test that can provide same-day results.

**Treatment:** If the culture is positive, a penicillin shot or antibiotics taken by mouth (for a full 10 days) are usually prescribed. This treatment will help to prevent more serious illness such as rheumatic fever, which can damage the heart valves.

**Exclusion:** Until at least a full 24 hours after treatment begins and the child will continue the antibiotics for 10 days

**Medication:** Remember that medication at school is given only with written physician order and written parent permission.