

STREP THROAT

Strep throat is caused by Group A Streptococci (GAS) bacteria (germs) which are passed through nose and mouth droplets. It is very common in children. Strep throat and minor skin infections from GAS (like impetigo) are very common, with an estimated 10 million cases per year in the United States.

Most sore throats, however, are caused by viruses and are not treated with antibiotics.

Symptoms of strep throat:

Sore throat and any of these other signs of strep:

- A white coating on the throat and tonsils
- Headache
- Fever
- Stomach- ache / vomiting
- Swollen and tender neck glands
- Fine sandpapery rash

If your child develops a sore throat and any of these other signs, contact your health care provider. If you are aware that another child in the family or classroom has strep, ask that he/she be tested for strep throat. If strep is diagnosed, your child should receive treatment.

If your child is infected with Strep throat, your health care provider will usually prescribe antibiotics.

Why is it important that your child receive treatment? There are three main reasons:

1. Treatment reduces spread. If not treated or not treated long enough, your child may continue to spread the infection to other members of your family.

2. Treatment with antibiotics can prevent rheumatic fever. Although rare, some children with untreated strep throat later develop rheumatic fever, which can cause abnormalities of the heart valves and inflammation of the joints. Remember, it is very important that you finish the entire course of treatment to prevent complications, especially rheumatic fever.

3. A sick person will not pass the germs on to others after he/she has taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

When can your child come back to school?

Children with strep infections may return to school after taking antibiotics for at least 24 hours and the fever is gone*.

*Fever should be absent for at least 24 hours before returning to school, without use of a fever reducer (like acetaminophen or ibuprofen).

What should you do to prevent the spread of strep throat?

1. Thoroughly wash your hands and your child's hands after wiping noses and before eating or preparing food.
2. Wash dishes carefully in hot soapy water or sanitize in a dishwasher
3. Do not share food, cups, spoons, or toys that are put into a child's mouth.
4. Consider purchasing a new tooth brush after the first 24 hours of treatment (or sanitize in a dishwasher)