

Gila County
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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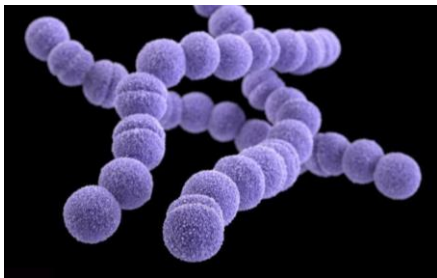
Group A Strep Fact Sheet

Background

Group A strep (GAS) is a bacteria often found in the nose and throat of healthy people without causing illness. When GAS does cause illness, it is classified as either non-invasive or invasive.

Non-Invasive: ear infections, strep throat, and Scarlet Fever are common non-invasive GAS infections. These infections are usually not very severe, but are highly contagious

Invasive: Streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS) and necrotizing fasciitis are rare, but aggressive and severe invasive GAS infections.



Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 1 to 3 days after exposure, and vary depending on the type of illness that develops. Early signs of toxic shock syndrome may include low blood pressure, shock, dizziness, confusion, red rash, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Early signs of necrotizing fasciitis include fever, severe pain, swelling and redness of the affected area. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical care immediately.

Transmission

These bacteria are spread through direct contact with mucus or droplets from the nose or throat of people infected with GAS, or by contact with infected wounds or sores on the skin.

Prevention

The spread of all types of GAS infection can be reduced by good hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing and before preparing foods or eating. Persons who are ill should stay home from work, school, or day-care until 24 hours after beginning antibiotic therapy or until they a doctor informs them that they are no longer contagious. All wounds should be kept clean and watched for possible signs of infection, such as fever, redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the wound site.



Treatment

GAS infections can be treated with many different antibiotics. For STSS and necrotizing fasciitis, high-dose penicillin and clindamycin are recommended. In severe cases, supportive care in an intensive care unit may be needed. Necrotizing fasciitis often requires early and aggressive surgery to remove damaged tissue and stop the spread. Early treatment may reduce the risk of death from invasive GAS disease, but even the best medical care does not prevent death in every case.

For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.