

STREP THROAT (STREPTOCOCCAL INFECTIONS)

The most frequent streptococcal infection is strep throat. Other infections commonly caused by strep include: impetigo, inner ear infections and scarlet fever. Sometimes an individual may not experience the sore throat typically associated with a strep infection, and may have symptoms of other strep infections.

Signs and symptoms of strep infection may include:

- Sore throat
- Sudden onset of fever
- Upset stomach, nausea, vomiting
- Fine rash on chest, armpits, elbow, groin and inner surfaces of the thighs. It does not involve the face, but there is usually flushing of the cheeks.
- Very red throat, often with white patches
- Swollen glands (below the ears)
- Earache

The illness is spread by airborne exposure to the germ, especially by coughing and sneezing. It is rarely spread by indirect contact through objects or from minimal contact with an infected individual.

Individuals who experience symptoms of a strep infection should be seen by a health care provider who may perform a strep test. Strep infections are treated with antibiotics. If diagnosed with a strep infection, the person may return to usual activities once the antibiotic medication has been administered for at least 24 hours. To completely eliminate the germ, antibiotics must be taken as ordered until all the medication has been taken. Once a diagnosis has been made, it is important to inform individuals who have had contact with the contagious person as well as teachers and the school office.