

# Streptococcus - Strep Throat and Impetigo

Bacteria called group A *Streptococcus* (group A strep) can cause many different infections. These infections range from minor illnesses to very serious and deadly diseases. Learn more below about some of these infections, including symptoms, risk factors, treatment options, and how to prevent them.

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## Strep Throat

Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils. It is caused by the Streptococcus bacteria and is most common in children age 5 through 15 years old.

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### The most common symptoms are:

- Sore throat, which usually starts quickly and can cause swallowing to be painful
- Fever
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks
- Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth
- Swelling in the front of the neck

### Other symptoms:

- Headache
- Stomach pain
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Rash (if this happens it is called Scarlet Fever)

Symptoms usually start 1 to 3 days after a person has had contact with a sick person.

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### How is strep throat spread?

- Coughing and sneezing
- Touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching something that a sick person has sneezed on, coughed on, or touched

A person who is diagnosed with strep throat will stop being able to spread the infection approximately 24 hours after starting an antibiotic from the doctor.

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### What can I do now?

Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child becomes sick. A doctor can do a test to see if a person has strep throat. If the test is positive, the doctor might prescribe antibiotics.

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### If your child gets sick, prevent others from getting ill by:

- Washing your hands often.

- Not sharing eating utensils such as forks and cups.
- Sneezing and coughing into the arm or shoulder, not the hand.
- Stay home until 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.
- Clean objects and commonly touched items, such as toys and TV remote controls, that a sick person has touched.

*For more information, contact your health care provider, your School Nurse, the Marin County Health Department at 415-473-4163, or visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/groupAstrep/index.html>*

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## **Impetigo**

Impetigo is an illness caused by the same bacteria that also causes strep throat and scarlet fever , called Group A Streptococcus.

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### **It causes:**

- Red sores on the face, especially around a child's nose and mouth, and on the hands and feet. The sores burst and develop yellow crusts.
- Sometimes fever, headache, tiredness, and lack of appetite

Most people only have skin sores, but rarely the bacteria can travel to other parts of the body and create infections in the eyes, lungs, or brain.

Impetigo can be a serious illness for newborns and people with chronic illnesses. It occurs most often in crowded living areas, summer camps, in warm weather, and while playing contact sports.

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### **What can I do now?**

Call your child's doctor or health care provider if your child is sick. Your child may be prescribed antibiotics, either in a topical cream or pill form.

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### **If your child gets sick, prevent others from getting ill by:**

- Washing his or her hands well and often.
  - Covering any open sores with a bandage.
  - Not sharing bath towels with a sick person.
  - Washing sheets, pillowcases, and towels daily while a person is sick.
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### **How is impetigo spread?**

- By touching the fluid from an open sore
- By sharing a bath towel or products with a person who has impetigo
- Rarely from coughing and sneezing

This illness is spread most often when a person has open sores that are draining.

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**If my child has this disease, when can he or she return to school or child care?**

Children with impetigo may NOT attend school or child care if they have fever or are unusually tired, or if they have open sores on their hands. Children may attend school with sores on other parts of their body as long as the sores are covered with a bandage.

*For more information, contact your health care provider, your School Nurse, the Marin County Health Department at 415 4163, or visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/groupAstrep/index.html>*

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