

Streptococcal sore throat



Streptococcal sore throat is a bacterial infection of the throat and tonsils caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*.

How Streptococcal sore throat is spread

Streptococci are spread when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes small droplets containing infectious agents into the air. The droplets may be breathed in by those nearby. The droplets may contaminate hands or objects such as drinking cups or eating utensils.

Sometimes spread occurs by eating contaminated food or by direct contact with infected wounds or skin sores.

Signs and symptoms

These include:

- > fever
- > sore throat
- > tender, swollen glands in the neck.

Complications include:

Scarlet fever

Symptoms include:

- > all the symptoms of a throat infection.
- > a fine red rash, which first appears as tiny red bumps on the chest and abdomen. This rash may spread all over the body. It looks like sunburn and feels like a rough piece of sandpaper. It is usually more red in the armpits and groin areas. The rash lasts about 2 to 5 days. After the rash is gone, the skin on the tips of the fingers and toes often begins to peel.

- > reddening of the tongue. Bumps on the tongue appear larger than usual (known as 'strawberry tongue').

Quinsy

- > An abscess (collection of pus) next to a tonsil.

Rheumatic fever

- > Rheumatic fever is an uncommon complication. Fever, joint pain and a skin rash develop soon after a sore throat. Later, inflammation of the heart (rheumatic carditis), or shaking and unsteadiness (Sydenham's chorea or St Vitus' dance) may occur.

Inflammation and reduced function of the kidney

- > This is not a common complication.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis is made by taking a throat swab and sending this to the laboratory for testing. A sore throat may also be caused by a viral infection and testing a throat swab is the only way to tell the difference between the two conditions.

Incubation period

(time between becoming infected and developing symptoms)

1 to 3 days.

Infectious period

(time during which an infected person can infect others)

Untreated people remain infectious for 2 to 3 weeks after becoming ill. Treated people are infectious for about 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic treatment begins.

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Treatment

Effective antibiotic treatment is available. To prevent potential complications, the full course of antibiotics should be completed.

Prevention

Streptococcal sore throat can be prevented by the following measures:

- > [Exclude people with streptococcal sore throat from childcare, preschool, school and work](#) until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well.
- > [Cover the nose and mouth](#) when coughing or sneezing.
- > Always follow good [hand washing procedures](#).
- > Dispose of soiled tissues appropriately.
- > Do not share eating utensils, food or drinking cups.
- > Do not drink [unpasteurised milk](#).
- > People with sore throats should not prepare food for others.

Useful links

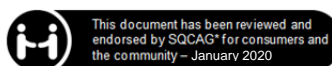
- > SA Health: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au
 - Hand hygiene
 - Rheumatic heart disease and acute rheumatic fever
 - Exclusion from childcare, preschool, school and work
 - Milk - Pasteurised vs raw.
- > Wash, Wipe, Cover: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/WashWipeCover

You've Got What? 5th Edition

Communicable Disease Control Branch
Telephone: 1300 232 272
Email: HealthCommunicableDiseases@sa.gov.au
The SA Health Disclaimer for this resource is located at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/youvegotwhat

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