

Group A Strep - Pharyngitis Impetigo & Cellulitis (page 1 of 2)

Introduction

This leaflet is intended for patients in hospital and their families in order to give them a greater understanding of Group A Streptococcus.

What is Group A Strep (GAS)?

GAS is a bacterium often found in the throat and on the skin.

How does it spread?

GAS survive in throats and on hands for long enough to allow easy spread between people through sneezing, kissing and skin contact.

People may carry GAS in the throat or on the skin and have no symptoms of illness. This is sometimes known as being colonised.

What illnesses are caused by Group A Strep?

Most GAS infections are relatively mild illnesses such as pharyngitis 'Strep throat', or a skin infection such as impetigo.

On rare occasions, these bacteria can cause other severe and even life threatening diseases.

Pharyngitis ('Strep throat')

You will have a red painful sore throat. You may have swollen lymph nodes (glands) in your neck, a temperature and a headache. Nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain can occur but are more common in children than in adults.

You can get 'Strep throat' from an infected person. You may be sick within three days of being exposed to it. Once infected you can pass the infection onto others for up to two to three weeks.

'Strep throat' is easily treated with antibiotics.

After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment you will no longer be infectious. However, it is essential to complete the entire course of antibiotics as prescribed.

Impetigo

Impetigo is an infection of the top layers of the skin and is most common among young children aged two to six years.

It usually starts when the bacteria get into a cut, scratch or insect bite.

Skin infections are usually caused by staphylococcus, (staph) a different

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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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bacterium, but can be caused by Group A Strep. Skin infections are usually caused by different types of strep bacteria than those that cause 'Strep throat'.

The infection is spread by direct contact with wounds or sores. Scratching may spread the lesions.

From the time of infection until you show symptoms is usually one to three days.

If your skin does not have breaks in it you cannot be infected by the dried strep in the air.

It is treated with oral antibiotics, antibiotic cream may be used as well.

Cellulitis

Cellulitis is inflammation of the skin and deep underlying tissues.

Symptoms of cellulitis may include fever and chills and swollen lymph nodes.

Your skin will be painful, red and tender. Your skin may blister and then scab over.

Cellulitis may start with a minor incident such as a bruise or burn, surgical cut or wound and will usually affect your arm or leg.

A swab is taken to identify the bacteria causing the infection and you will be given antibiotics.

Further information may be obtained from the Public Health England (PHE) website at www.phe.gov.uk or telephone Local PHE South West 030 0303 8162.