



Just the Facts

57-007-0894

...About Strep Throat



Strep throat is an infection caused by the *Streptococcus pyogenes* (strep) bacteria. The infection is more common in children than in adults.

Children with strep throat often have a fever and complain of sore throat, headache and stomachache. They may also have swollen, tender glands in the neck, and swollen, pustular tonsils. Scarlet fever, a rare form of strep infection, is characterized by a sore throat, more general symptoms such as fatigue, and a red rash on the body that feels like sandpaper. Some children can get very serious complications, such as rheumatic fever, if the infection is not treated completely with antibiotics.

The strep bacteria are found in the secretions from the mouth or nose of someone who is infected. The infection spreads through the air when the infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. Treating the infected person with an antibiotic can stop the spread of infection.

Diagnosis of strep throat is difficult just by looking at the throat. The physician has to take a culture (or swab) of the throat to see if strep bacteria are present. If the diagnosis is strep throat, the physician will prescribe an antibiotic, usually penicillin. This medication comes in the form of a pill, a liquid or an injection. If treatment begins soon after the start of the infection, the child will feel better very soon. This treatment may also prevent the serious complications that can result from strep throat.

THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

- ◆ Child Care Facilities
- ◆ Information/Guidance
- ◆ Symptoms & Treatment

- ◆ Watch your child for signs of strep throat if another child has it.
- ◆ If you suspect your child has strep throat, contact your physician. If your child has strep throat, your physician will start antibiotic treatment as soon as possible. Be sure you give your child all the antibiotic; otherwise the infection may not be completely cured.
- ◆ Remember, handwashing is important to prevent the spread of the infection, especially after wiping your child's nose and before eating or preparing food. Teach your child to cover his or her mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- ◆ If your child has strep throat, do not return your child to the child care facility until he or she has taken antibiotic treatment for at least 1 full day and has received medical clearance to return to the facility.

For additional information contact your local health consultant or health care provider.

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