



Strep Throat



Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils caused by group A *Streptococcus* bacteria (called "group A strep").

The bacteria that cause strep throat tend to hang out in the nose and throat, so normal activities like sneezing, coughing, or shaking hands can easily spread infection from one person to another.

The best way to keep from getting strep throat is to *wash your hands often* and avoid sharing eating utensils, like forks or cups.

The most common symptoms of strep throat include:

- Sore throat, usually starts quickly and can cause severe pain when swallowing
- A fever (101°F or above)
- Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus
- Tiny red spots (petechiae) on the area at the back of the roof of the mouth (the soft or hard palate)
- Headache, nausea, or vomiting
- Swollen lymph nodes in the neck
- Body aches
- Rash (Scarlet Fever)

A strep test is needed to tell if you have strep throat; just looking at your throat is not enough to make a diagnosis.

People with strep throat should stay home from work, school, or daycare until they have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours so they don't spread the infection to others. Be sure to finish the entire prescription, even when you start feeling better. When you stop taking antibiotics early, you risk getting an infection later that is resistant to antibiotic treatment.

