

Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS)

Group A streptococcus (GAS) is a bacteria commonly found in the throat or on the skin. Many healthy people carry the bacteria and have no signs of illness. The majority of GAS infections cause relatively mild illnesses like strep throat and impetigo.

Invasive group A streptococcal disease (iGAS) is a serious and sometimes life-threatening illness that occurs when the bacteria invades a part of the body where it is not usually found. This includes illnesses such as meningitis (infection of the lining of the brain), necrotizing fasciitis (infection that destroys muscle or its adjacent tissue), bacteremia (infection of the blood) and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (infection that damages organs like the kidneys, liver, and lungs).

What are the symptoms of iGAS disease?

Typical symptoms of iGAS disease include; fever, severe body aches, chills, sore throat, dizziness, confusion, or rash. There may be severe pain, redness or swelling around a wound or injured area. A person with iGAS can become very ill within a few hours.

How is GAS spread?

GAS is spread by direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat of an infected person or carrier and through contact with infected wounds or sores on the skin. The risk of spreading the infection is highest when a person is unwell with an illness such as strep throat or an infected wound. People who carry the bacteria, but have no symptoms, are much less contagious.

More to know

- If you've been in close contact with a person who has recently had invasive GAS disease, see your health care provider. You may need preventative antibiotics.
- Wash your hands regularly especially after coughing or sneezing and before handling or eating food.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, use a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands.
- Make sure your immunizations are up to date, including the annual flu shot.
- Avoid activities where you may have come into contact with someone else's body fluids such as open mouth kissing and sharing water bottles, utensils or needles.
- People diagnosed with strep throat should stay home from work, school, or child care until 24 hours after taking an antibiotic.
- Keep all wounds clean, and watch for possible signs of infection such as rapid increase in redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the wound site. Anyone with signs of an infected wound, especially if fever develops, should seek medical care right away.



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