

January 19, 2024

Public Health Alert – Increase in cases of iGAS in Manitoba and Ontario

Situation

Manitoba and Ontario have been seeing an increase in invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS) cases recently. A trend of higher iGAS cases post pandemic is something that is being seen in many jurisdictions, including ours. Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) catchment area regularly has higher iGAS rates than the rest of Ontario; in 2023, there were 43 cases.

As a follow up to our Public Health Alert on iGAS in November, and with an increase in cases in surrounding jurisdictions, we want to remind all Health Care Practitioners of the actions below.

Actions requested

- Prompt assessment and treatment of non-invasive GAS and remaining alert for signs and symptoms of iGAS, particularly for those at increased risk. Increased risk for iGAS infections include:
 - Wounds or dermatological conditions
 - Alcohol and drug misuse
 - Those with chronic illness or underlying medical conditions
 - Being homeless or underhoused
 - Children under 4, older adults, and those who are immunocompromised
 - Those who are pregnant or postpartum
- Educate patients on the signs and symptoms of serious bacterial infections and when to seek urgent medical attention.
- Promote routine and seasonal vaccinations for eligible patients. Severe illness from iGAS in other areas has often followed respiratory infections and iGAS is known to correlate with recent chickenpox infection.
- Prompt clinical assessment and diagnostic testing to support early recognition and initiation of treatment.

Resources

- [Enhanced Epidemiological Summary: Invasive Group A Streptococcal \(iGAS\) Disease in Ontario: October 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023](#)



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

- [Ministry of Health's Case Definitions and Disease Specific Information for iGAS](#)
- [Manitoba Health Communication to health care providers](#)

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