

WHAT TO EXPECT WHILE IN HOSPITAL?

Special precautions will be taken while you are infectious:

- A sign will be posted on your door.
- You may need to stay in your room.
- Staff may wear gown, gloves, and a mask when providing direct care.
- All staff and visitors must clean their hands when they enter and leave your room.

**IT'S OK TO ASK NURSES, DOCTORS,
AND OTHER HEALTH CARE
PROVIDERS IF THEY HAVE CLEANED
THEIR HANDS.**

**REMIND VISITORS TO CLEAN THEIR
HANDS.**

**HAND HYGIENE
THE BEST
WAY TO PREVENT
INFECTION**

HAND HYGIENE

Special care must be paid to hand hygiene as it is the best way to prevent the spread of germs.

GOOD HAND HYGIENE INCLUDES:

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

1. Apply to palm of one hand.
2. Rub hands together, covering all of hands and fingers.
3. Rub until hands feel dry.

Hand Washing

1. Remove all jewelry.
2. Use warm running water and soap.
3. Spend at least **15-30** seconds lathering and washing hands.
4. Rub hands together, paying attention to fingertips, between the fingers, and thumbs.
5. Rinse thoroughly.
6. Dry with paper towel and turn off tap with paper towel.
7. Dispose of paper towel in the garbage.

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INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS

**Information for Clients,
Residents, Families, and
Visitors**

**INFECTION PREVENTION
& CONTROL PROGRAM**
www.easternhealth.ca

WHAT IS INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS?

Group A streptococci are bacteria (germs) found in the throat and on the skin.

Most infections cause mild illness like strep throat and impetigo; however, they can spread to the blood, muscle, lungs, and fat tissue causing life-threatening disease.

The most severe forms of this disease are:

- Necrotizing Fasciitis (NF-flesh eating disease), an infection of the muscle and fat tissue.
- Streptococcal Shock Syndrome (STSS).

Both progress quickly and cause low blood pressure/shock and injury to organs like the kidneys, liver, and lungs.

WHO CAN GET INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS?

Few individuals will develop Invasive Group A Streptococcus.

Some higher risk groups include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals with skin lesions (cuts, chicken pox, and surgical wounds).
- Elderly.
- Individuals with a history of alcohol abuse and IV drug use.

Most individuals will have a skin or throat infection and some may not have any symptoms.

WHY DOES INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS OCCUR?

- Invasive Group A Streptococcus occurs when there are breaks in the skin that allow the bacteria (germs) to enter the body.
- It can also occur when the individual's ability to fight infection is reduced due to chronic illness or an illness affecting the immune system.
- Occasionally, these bacteria can invade the blood, deep tissues, lungs, muscles, and/or fat tissue to cause severe, life-threatening infections, such as Necrotizing Fasciitis (NF) or Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS).

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS?

Early signs and symptoms of Necrotizing Fasciitis (NF) include, but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Severe pain
- Swelling
- Redness

This occurs quite quickly, over several hours, and requires immediate medical attention.

Early signs and symptoms of STSS may include, but are not limited to:

- Fever
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Low blood pressure
- Rash
- Abdominal pain.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS?

- Prompt medical attention and antibiotics are recommended.
- Severe cases may require additional support and admission to hospital.
- Surgery may also be needed if you have developed Necrotizing Fasciitis.

HOW CAN I PREVENT INVASIVE GROUP A STREPTOCOCCUS?

- The spread of this disease can be reduced by washing your hands and keeping any wounds or open areas clean.
- Wounds should be monitored for signs and symptoms of infection. Things to watch for include:
 - ◊ Redness
 - ◊ Swelling
 - ◊ Pain
- If you notice these symptoms, especially if you have a fever, you should contact your physician immediately.
- Routine childhood immunization with varicella (chicken pox) vaccine is also recommended. As skin lesions caused by chicken pox (varicella virus) can increase the risk of developing an Invasive Group A Strep infection.