



**NL Health
Services**

Infection Prevention and
Control

FACT SHEET

Invasive Group A Streptococcus



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 such as strep throat. Rarely infection can spread to the blood, muscle, lungs, and fat tissue causing life-threatening disease which is called Invasive Group A Streptococcus.

What are some examples of Invasive Group A Streptococcus?

- Necrotizing Fasciitis (NF)
- Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS)

Who can get Invasive Group A Streptococcus?

Few individuals will develop Invasive Group A Streptococcus. Most individuals will have a skin or throat infection, and some may not have any symptoms. Those who are at a higher risk include:

- Individuals with skin lesions (cuts, chickenpox, and surgical wounds).
- The elderly.
- Individuals with a history of alcohol abuse and/or IV drug use.

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 infection such as Necrotizing Fasciitis (NF) or Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS).

How is Invasive Group A Streptococcus treated?

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

If you are admitted to hospital, special precautions will be taken while you are infectious. A sign will be placed on your door, you may need to stay in your room, staff may wear personal protective equipment while providing care, and all staff and visitors must clean their hands when entering and leaving your room.

How to prevent the spread of Invasive Group A Streptococcus

- Wash your hands.
- Keep wounds clean and dry.
- Monitor wounds for signs and symptoms of infection: fever, redness, swelling, and pain.
- Routine childhood immunization for varicella (chickenpox) is recommended as skin lesions caused by chickenpox can increase the risk of developing an invasive group A strep infection.
- Occasionally, close household contacts may be offered antibiotics to prevent secondary cases.