



# PUBLIC FACT SHEET

## STREP THROAT and SCARLET FEVER

### What are strep throat and scarlet fever?

Strep throat and scarlet fever are diseases both caused by an infection with group A streptococci bacteria. When the bacteria infect the throat the illness is known as strep throat. The bacteria can also produce a toxin which causes a distinctive skin rash- this illness is called scarlet fever.

### How are strep throat and scarlet fever spread?

The illness may be spread through the following ways:

- Close contact with a person infected with the bacteria.
- Occasionally through contact with an object that was used by an infected person.

### What are possible symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Sore throat
- Fever
- Difficulty swallowing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Rash on neck and chest that has a "sandpaper" texture
- Swollen, red tongue
- Headache
- Chills

### How are strep throat and scarlet fever diagnosed?

It is diagnosed by a throat swab.

### What is the treatment for strep throat and scarlet fever?

Strep throat and scarlet fever are treated with antibiotics. Not every sore throat should be treated with antibiotics, but strep throat and scarlet fever should be. If not treated, the disease can lead to rheumatic fever. Ibuprofen can also help decrease the pain associated with the sore throat.

### How can I prevent strep throat and scarlet fever?

Avoid contact with infected people. Wash your hands frequently. Keep persons who are ill home from school or work until they have been on antibiotics for 24-48 hours. Change your toothbrush after you are no longer contagious, but before finishing antibiotics to prevent re-infection.

### For more information on strep throat and scarlet fever:

Ottawa County Health Department

[www.miOttawa.org](http://www.miOttawa.org)

Medline Plus/National Institutes of Health

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000639.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000639.htm)

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000974.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000974.htm)