

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

STREPTOCOCCAL - GROUP A, INVASIVE (IGAS)

“Group A strep” is a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus pyogenes*. Strep is commonly found in the throat and on the skin. Many healthy people carry strep and never get sick. Severe illness may occur when bacteria get inside the body, which is called “invasive group A strep” disease or IGAS.

Symptoms

- IGAS can take several forms, including pneumonia, blood infections, skin infections, meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord), bone infections, and infections related to childbirth.
- Necrotizing fasciitis is a severe but rare form of invasive GAS disease. Symptoms include:
 - severe pain, redness, and swelling on the skin or near a wound
 - fever
- Streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS) is another serious form of IGAS. STSS is not the same as the “toxic shock syndrome” due to the bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* which has been associated with tampon usage. Early signs and symptoms of STSS include:
 - Fever, dizziness and confusion
 - severe pain, often in an arm or leg that comes on suddenly
 - in some cases, a flat red rash covers large areas of the body

Transmission

- GAS spreads through contact with skin or fluids from the nose or throat of infected people. People who are ill with strep throat or skin infections are most likely to spread the infection. Persons who carry the bacteria are much less contagious.
- IGAS infections occur when the bacteria get past your body’s defenses. The bacteria can get in through a break in the skin or when a person’s immune system is decreased due to chronic illnesses, drug abuse, or medications such as steroids.

Treatment

- Invasive GAS infections are treated with antibiotics. Some patients may need intensive care or surgery to remove the infection. It is important to seek treatment for IGAS quickly, because these infections can get worse rapidly and may be fatal.

Prevention

- The spread of all types of GAS infection can be reduced by good hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing and before preparing foods or eating.
- Persons with sore throats should be seen by a doctor who can perform tests to find out whether the illness is strep throat. If the test result shows strep throat, the person should stay home from work, school, or day care until 24 hours after taking an antibiotic.
- All wounds should be kept clean and watched for possible signs of infection such as redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the wound site.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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