

Strep throat

Strep throat is a throat infection caused by bacteria called *Streptococcus pyogenes* (Group A *Streptococcus*). The symptoms of strep throat can range from mild to severe. They include sore throat, painful swallowing, fever, swollen glands in the neck, and loss of appetite.

Serious but rare complications of strep throat include scarlet fever, rheumatic fever and kidney disease.

How it spreads

Strep throat spreads from person to person via infected droplets in the air. People get infected by:

- breathing in droplets when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes on them or near them
- direct contact with infected saliva – for example, sharing a cup or eating utensils with an infected person
- touching a surface contaminated with droplets – for example, hands, tissues or toys – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Exclusion period

Exclude until the person has taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours and feels well.

Actions for educators and other staff

Follow the exclusion period in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Ensure staff with sore throats stay at home until they feel well.

Ensure staff and children have good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Ensure staff use appropriate cleaning practices, as described in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Actions for parents and carers

If you think your child has strep throat, see your doctor. They may need to take a course of antibiotics.

Keep your child at home until they have been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours and feel well.

Teach your child to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue into a bin and wash their hands. If there are no tissues nearby, teach them to cough or sneeze into their inner elbow instead of their hands.

Make sure your child washes their hands thoroughly and often.

More information about strep throat

See healthdirect for more information on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of strep throat (healthdirect.gov.au/strep-throat).

To find out if a child needs medical help:

- use the online symptom checker (healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker)
- speak to a registered nurse by calling the 24-hour health advice hotline on 1800 022 222.