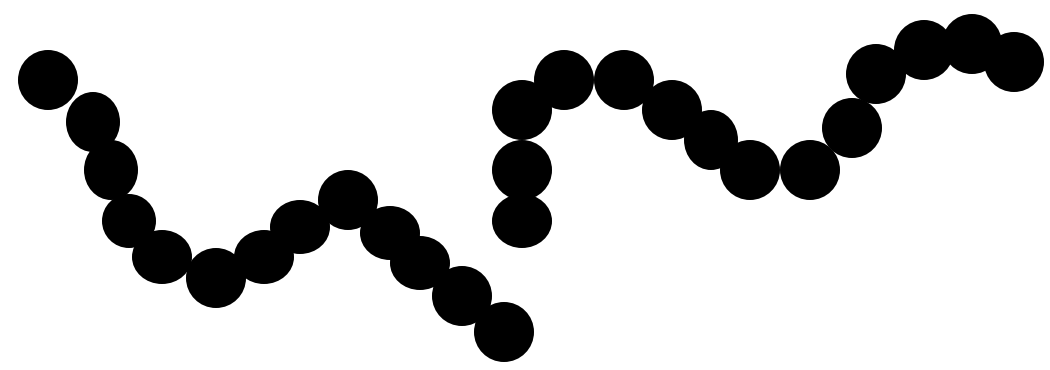


# Group A Streptococcal (GAS) Disease

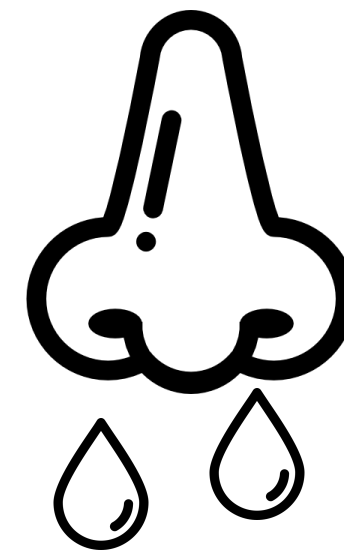


## Fact Sheet

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Group A streptococcus (GAS) is a bacteria often found in the throat and on the skin.



GAS spreads through direct contact with mucus from the nose or throat of persons who are infected. It can also spread through direct contact with infected wounds or sores.

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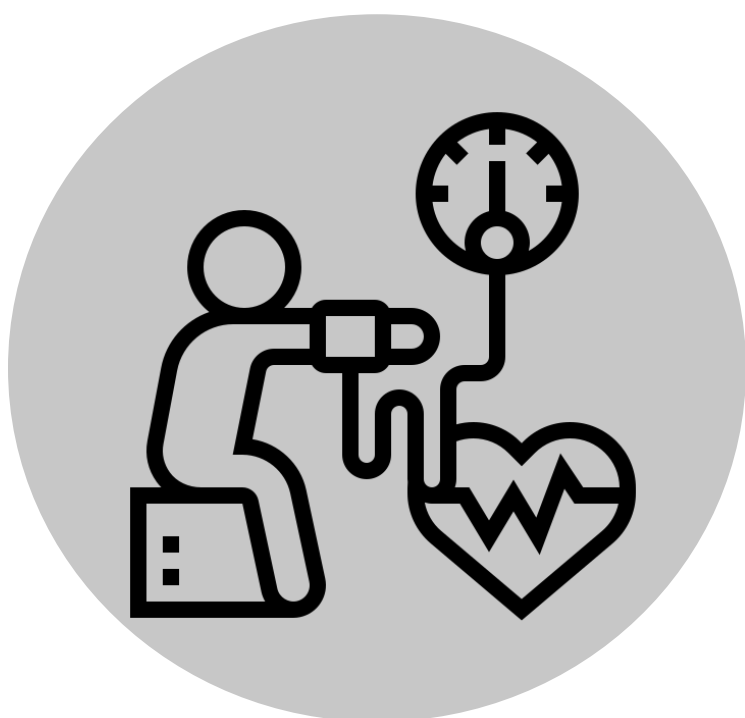
## Types of Illnesses

Infection with GAS can result in various illnesses including:



### Mild Illness:

- Strep throat
- Skin infection such as impetigo
- Scarlet fever (rash illness that usually occurs at the same time as strep throat)



### Invasive GAS Disease:

Severe GAS disease may occur when bacteria get into the blood, muscle, or lungs. This is called "invasive GAS disease" and can be life-threatening. These include:

- Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS)
  - STSS causes blood pressure to drop rapidly and organs to fail
  - STSS is not the same as "toxic shock syndrome" associated with tampon usage
- Necrotizing fasciitis (NF)
  - NF is sometimes described in the media as "the flesh-eating bacteria" that destroys muscles, fat, and skin tissue
- Pneumonia (lung infection caused by GAS bacteria)
- Cellulitis (skin and soft tissue infection)
- Rheumatic fever (heart infection that is a complication of untreated strep infection)

Invasive GAS infections occur when a person has sores or other breaks in the skin that allow the bacteria to get into the tissue. It may also occur when a person has chronic illness or a weak immune system.

People with chronic illnesses like cancer, diabetes, kidney failure, and those who use medications such as steroids have a higher risk of invasive GAS disease.

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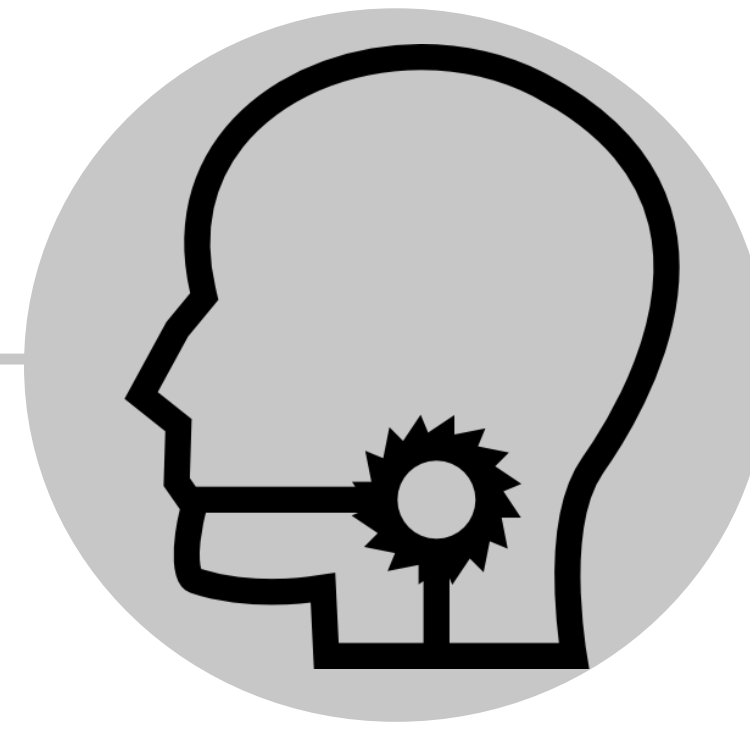
# Signs and Symptoms



Fever



Severe Pain



Sore Throat



Rash

Symptoms of GAS vary based on the type of illness. Signs and symptoms include fever, sore throat, vomiting, rash, dizziness, confusion, and severe pain and swelling.

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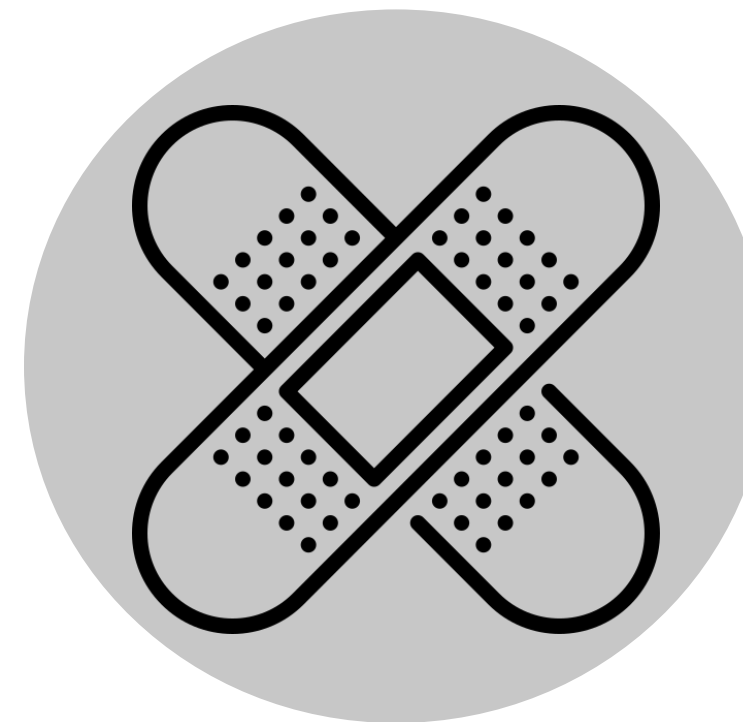
GAS infections can be treated with antibiotics. Early treatment may reduce the risk of death from invasive GAS disease. Hospital care may be needed for those with very severe illness.

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## Prevention



Proper hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing and before preparing foods or eating

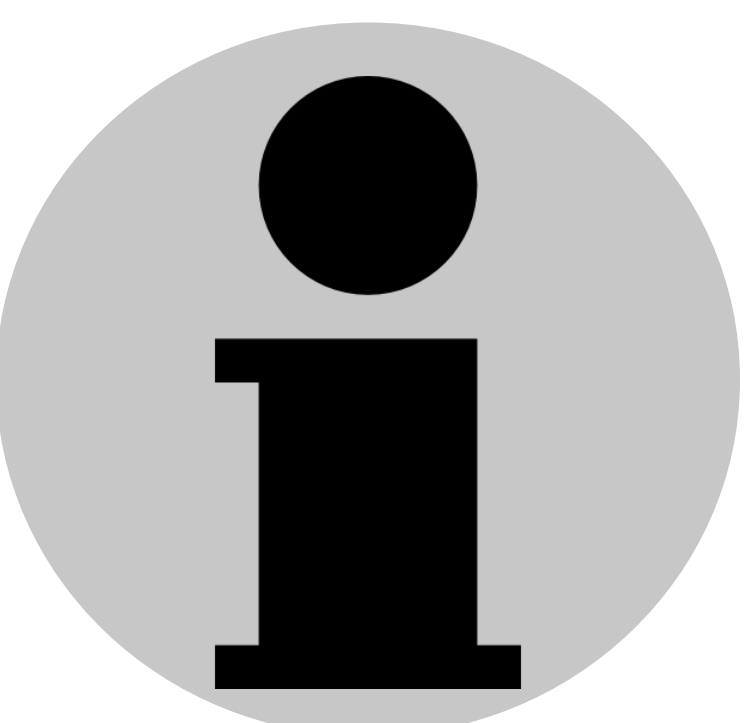


Keep all wounds clean

If your doctor is treating you for strep throat, stay home from school, work, or daycare until 24 hours after starting an antibiotic. Watch for possible signs of infection at wound sites, including redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the site. See a healthcare provider if signs of an infected wound occur.

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## For More Information, Visit:



1. [www.maine.gov/dhhs/GAS](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/GAS)
2. [www.cdc.gov/groupAstrep](http://www.cdc.gov/groupAstrep)

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.

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