

# KIDS HEALTH

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## RESURGENCE OF GROUP A STREPTOCOCCAL DISEASE IN CHILDREN



CDC issued a warning about an increase in invasive group A strep (iGAS) infections among children in the United States for 2022-2023. iGAS infections include [streptococcal toxic shock syndrome](#) (a rare but serious bacterial infection that can rapidly develop a sunburn-like rash or generalized erythroderma, low blood pressure, multiorgan failure, and sometimes death), and [necrotizing fasciitis](#) (flesh-eating disease).

**Pediatricians and parents should make sure that children are up to date on all childhood vaccines especially against [influenza](#) and [chickenpox](#) since getting these infections can increase the risk of getting an iGAS infection.**

### WHAT IS STREP THROAT?

Strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis) is caused by group A *Streptococcus* (group A strep) which can be very contagious and can be spread by respiratory droplets and direct contact. It usually takes 2-5 days for someone exposed to strep A to show symptoms and become sick. Acute strep throat is mostly seen in school-age children and is rare under age 3.

### Symptoms:

Sore throat, pain when swallowing, red swollen tonsils sometimes with white patches or pus, small spots on the roof of the mouth (palatal petechiae), fever, swollen tonsillar lymph nodes (front of neck under the jaw), headaches, body aches, sunburn-like rash, nausea, or vomiting.

### **COUGH OR RUNNY NOSE ARE NOT symptoms of Strep A.**

Other severe symptoms include skin infection ([cellulitis](#) and [impetigo](#)), [scarlet fever](#), [post-influenza bacterial pneumonia](#), [streptococcal toxic shock syndrome](#), and [necrotizing fasciitis](#).



Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches and streaks of pus - [Strep throat - Mayo Clinic](#)



[Cellulitis](#) is a common bacterial skin infection that causes redness, swelling, and pain in the infected area of the skin

#### QUICK LINKS

- [Group A Streptococcal \(Group A Strep\) Infections](#)
- [Molecular Epidemiology and Genomics of Group A Streptococcus](#)
- [Group A Streptococcus Fact Sheet](#)
- [Group A Strep Surveillance](#)
- [Increasing incidence of invasive Group A Streptococcus disease, Idaho, USA, 2008-2019](#)
- [ABCs Bact Fact Interactive Data Dashboard](#)

### Signs and Symptoms of Strep Throat

Usually include:	Typically do not include:
✓ Sore throat starts quickly	✗ Cough
✓ Pain when swallowing	✗ Runny nose
✓ Fever	✗ Hoarseness
✓ Red and swollen tonsils, sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus	✗ Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
✓ Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth	
✓ Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck	



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## Diagnosis:

Usually, healthcare providers will determine the type of illness by asking about symptoms and conducting a physical exam which mainly involves looking for fever, throat soreness, and redness or swollen tonsils or lymph nodes. If they think it is strep throat, they will do a test by swabbing the child's throat.

**RAPID STREP TEST (antigen test):** This test quickly shows if group A strep bacteria are present. If the test is **POSITIVE**, the provider will prescribe antibiotics. If it is **NEGATIVE** and the provider still suspects it is strep throat, then a throat culture swab is taken for the test.

**THROAT CULTURE:** Detects strep throat if missed by the rapid strep test.

## Treatment:

Antibiotics are used to treat strep throat. **TAKE PRESCRIBED ANTIBIOTICS EXACTLY AS THE DOCTOR SAYS TO.** [Penicillin and amoxicillin](#) are most commonly used to treat group A strep. Nearly 30% of group A strep isolates are resistant to clindamycin and macrolides (e.g., azithromycin), so these antibiotics should only be used in case of true penicillin allergy.

There is a national [shortage of amoxicillin](#) that is anticipated to last several months. Alternate products are available.



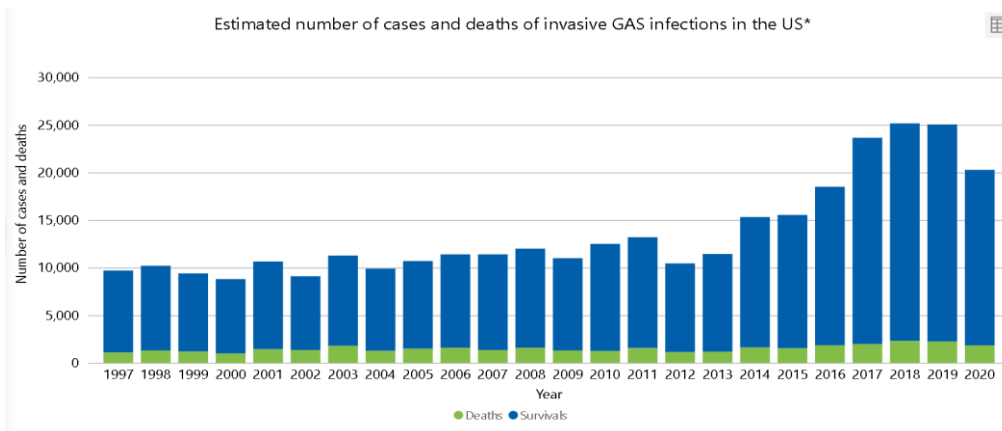
## STREP A CASES AND OUTBREAKS



CDC estimates 14,000 to 25,000 cases of invasive group A strep disease have occurred each year in the US, for the past five years. Among children, group A strep cases are [increasing](#).

[Streptococcus Surveillance](#)

[ABC Bact Fact Interactive Dashboard](#)



[Number of Streptococcus cases by State](#)