



**Group A
Streptococcal
infection.**



**information
for patients.**

What is Group A Streptococcal infection?

Group A Streptococcus (GAS) are bacteria (germs) which can be found in the nose, throat or on the skin without causing harm or infection. Sometimes these bacteria can get into parts of the body where they are not usually found, such as the blood, muscles or the lungs, and this can cause infection.

How do I get GAS infection?

GAS is spread mainly by droplets in the respiratory tract (nose and throat) of an infected person when they cough, sneeze or kiss. The bacteria can also be spread by hands that have not been washed into wounds or breaks in the skin.

How do I know if I am infected with GAS?

A healthcare worker (nurse or doctor) will take a swab of the infected site and send this to a laboratory to test if you have an infection. You may feel unwell and have symptoms such as high fever, sore throat or swollen glands.

How serious is the infection?

Infections caused by GAS can range from mild to severe. Most infections are mild, for example a sore throat or skin infection.

A small number of people may get a more serious infection called invasive Group A Streptococcus, or iGAS. This happens when the bacteria release poisons that spread to other sites in the body such as the blood, muscles or lungs. The infection caused can vary greatly and sometimes needs medical interventions such as surgery (an operation).

How will I be treated if I get a GAS infection?

Most people with a GAS infection will only need antibiotics (medicine) from their GP (family doctor) to treat their infection.

If you are in hospital you might need to stay in a single room for a few days to stop the infection spreading to others until the antibiotics have treated the infection.

The staff caring for you will always perform correct hand hygiene, wear gloves and an apron, and will wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms.

Staff will tell your friends and relatives to perform correct hand hygiene using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub before and after visiting.

If you have an iGAS infection the treatment you need might include other medical interventions. Staff will always discuss these with you and your family.

What can I do to stop the infection spreading to my friends and family?

Most people who come into contact with someone with GAS do not get the infection.

Make sure you wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, particularly after coughing or sneezing or touching wounds or breaks in the skin.

If your friends or family develop any of the signs or symptoms below, they should get in touch with their GP (family doctor) to say that they have come into contact with someone who has a GAS infection.

- Sore throat
- High fever
- Aching or tender muscles
- Redness around wounds

If you are worried or unsure about anything to do with GAS infection, please talk to the sister, staff nurse or care worker in charge of your care. Their details are as follows.

Name:

Department:

Phone number:

This leaflet is available in different languages, in large print and in Braille (English only). Please phone 0141 300 1100 for more information.

