

Guidelines for Streptococcal Pharyngitis Outbreaks in Schools and Healthy Populations

Note: these guidelines are designed to assist with outbreaks in congregate settings with a healthy population, e.g., schools, daycares, camps, workplaces.

Define the outbreak:

Case Definition: sore throat with confirmed group A *Streptococcus* by any laboratory testing method.

Outbreak Definitions:

- Increased absenteeism in association with laboratory confirmed streptococcal pharyngitis (e.g., schools, workplaces).
- Three or more laboratory-confirmed cases of streptococcal pharyngitis within a 3-day period in a congregate setting (e.g., classroom, daycare).

When you have an outbreak:

1. Confirm the diagnosis.
 - Schools or workplaces with high absenteeism: Call a sample of 15-20 absentees to estimate the proportion of absentees with strep pharyngitis. Document using a line listing or call down list.
 - In smaller congregate settings, a line list is a valuable tool to establish the existence of an outbreak and confirm the diagnosis.
2. An example of a call down list and line list can be found at the following in the outbreak toolkit:
https://oeeps.wv.gov/toolkits/Pages/toolkits_strep_pharyngitis.aspx
3. Implement appropriate control measures (see below).
4. Report the outbreak to your local health department immediately and stay in touch throughout the outbreak.
5. Follow the course of the outbreak to assure that control measures are adequate.
 - For large workplace or school outbreaks; follow absentee rates (not individual cases) AFTER existence of outbreak and diagnosis are established.
 - In smaller congregate settings, a line list is valuable to track the progress of the outbreak.

To help control the spread of infection:

1. Practice good hand hygiene. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water.
2. Encourage appropriate respiratory etiquette:
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands, if you don't have a tissue.
3. Increased cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
4. Do not return to work or school until 24 hours after antibiotics are initiated and fever has ceased without use of fever reducing medications.

REMEMBER: Outbreaks are immediately reportable to your local health department!
For further questions or information contact the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology.