

## **STREP THROAT**

### **What is Strep Throat?**

Strep throat is a bacterial infection affecting the throat and tonsils. It is caused by the streptococcal bacteria.

### **How is Strep Throat spread?**

Strep throat is spread by direct, close contact with an infected person, usually through coughing or sneezing. While strep throat may be no more severe than the sore throat that accompanies the common cold, it can become serious.

### **What are the symptoms of Strep Throat?**

Symptoms of strep throat may include some or all of the following: red, sore throat with or without white patches on the tonsils, swollen lymph nodes in the neck, fever and headache. Nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain are also common and are more likely to occur in children.

If your child complains of any of the above symptoms, you should contact your family physician. If your child is diagnosed with strep throat, he/she **MUST** stay home until 24 hours after beginning treatment. Antibiotic treatment will reduce the chance of complications. Although symptoms subside soon after beginning treatment, it is very important to complete the full course of antibiotics to prevent complications or re-infection. Please remember to discard and replace your child's toothbrush as well, to decrease the chance of re-infection.

### **How is Strep Throat treated?**

Strep throat will go away with or without treatment in 3 to 7 days. However, if left untreated, Strep could cause damage to the heart and/or kidney. Antibiotics are used to help prevent spreading the disease to others. Antibiotics also help to reduce risk of the infection spreading to other parts of the body.

### **How can Strep Throat be prevented?**

To help lessen the spread of this or any communicable disease, remind your child of the importance of frequent, thorough hand washing and covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

### **How serious is Strep Throat?**

Strep Throat rarely has complications associated with it. If not treated properly with antibiotics, complications can occur as a result of the strep infection or in response to the body's immune reaction to the strep infection.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Your family doctor, school nurse, or the local health department are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases.