



Strep Throat Exclusion Policy and Facts

Health Services
Mat-Su Borough School District
501 N. Gulkana
Palmer, AK 99645
P: (907) 746-9200

WHAT CAUSES STREP THROAT AND HOW DOES IT SPREAD?

Strep throat and scarlet fever (strep throat with a rash) are caused by group A streptococcus bacteria. This germ is spread by contact with secretions from the mouth and nose of infected persons. The period from exposure to development of symptoms is usually two to five days. Children are able to spread the disease until twenty-four hours after antibiotic treatment starts.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF STREP THROAT?

Symptoms may begin suddenly and include sore throat, fever, swollen glands below the jaw and in the neck, and occasionally pus on the tonsils. Sometimes there is a fine red, "sandpapery" rash. Vomiting and stomach pain may also occur. Similar symptoms can occur with a sore throat caused by a virus. Viral sore throats are not treated with antibiotics and improve on their own in a week or so.

DIAGNOSIS

Diagnosis of strep can be made by a rapid screening test which can miss up to 25% of cases. Therefore, the health care provider may request a bacterial culture even though the rapid screening test result is negative.

TREATMENT

If you suspect strep throat, keep your child at home and contact your healthcare provider.

Remember, not all sore throats are strep throat. Therefore, it is important for you to obtain an accurate diagnosis for your child's illness. If the diagnosis is strep throat, your health care provider will prescribe an antibiotic. To prevent more serious disease, (such as rheumatic fever), your child must take this medication **exactly as prescribed** for the full treatment, even if the symptoms are gone and your child is feeling well.

EXCLUSION POLICY

Your child must stay out of school for at least 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment or longer if they are too sick to participate in school. When they do return to school, they must have **no fever** (before taking any medicine such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen).

If you have any questions, please contact your healthcare provider, or school nurse. Help us to prevent the spread of strep and the possibility of a child developing complications from untreated strep throat.

Ignoring a strep throat or discontinuing medication before it is gone can lead to serious injuries to the heart, kidneys and joints if the bacterium enters the blood system.