

## Streptococcal A-infections

Pharynx and skin infections caused by Streptococcus A can be epidemics in families, daycare centres and schools. Streptococcus A may cause pharyngitis (tonsillitis), scarlet fever, impetigo or perianal dermatitis (inflammation of the skin around the anus).

Symptoms of scarlet fever may include sore throat, fever, headache, bright red tongue, and reddish and itchy rash. The symptoms of pharyngitis may include sore throat, white patches on tonsils and fever. The symptoms of impetigo typically include a rapidly spreading and excreting rash with yellowish crust, most commonly around the mouth and nose. The symptoms of perianal dermatitis include a reddish and itchy rash on the skin around the anus.

### Transmission

Streptococcus A spreads via secretions as a droplet and contact transmission in close contact. The spread of Streptococcus A can be prevented by good hand hygiene. Pharyngitis and scarlet fever caused by Streptococcus A can transmit for one week before the onset of symptoms. Impetigo spreads once the symptoms have started. The symptoms of Streptococcus A infections usually start within 1 to 4 days, but the incubation period may be up to one month.

If an infection caused by Streptococcus A is suspected, contact the health care services.

### Treatment

Streptococcus A infection is always treated with an antibiotic. Impetigo is treated on a case-by-case basis with either a local treatment preparation or an oral antibiotic.

In pharyngitis and scarlet fever:

- toothbrush and toothpaste must be changed 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- hand towel must be changed daily
- pacifiers and their containers must be boiled daily
- dental prostheses, occlusal splints for bruxism, etc. must be washed daily
- children's sleep toys must be washed in 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment

In impetigo and perianal dermatitis:

- towels and underwear must be changed daily
- touching of infected skin areas must be avoided
- bed linen must be changed in 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- children's sleep toys must be washed in 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment

Normal weekly cleaning is sufficient cleaning (vacuuming the rooms and thoroughly wiping the surfaces, door handles and taps in the toilet).

Infectious Diseases Unit

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If a child is diagnosed with one of the above-mentioned infections, it must be reported to the place of care or school. The child can return to the place of care or school 24 hours after starting an oral antibiotic. In case of impetigo, the child can return to the place of care or school 48 hours after the beginning of local treatment.

More instructions on the website of THL at <https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset/taudit-ja-torjunta/taudit-ja-taudinaiheuttajat-a-o/a-ryhman-streptokokki>

See also about infections and daycare in the Health Library  
<https://www.terveyskirjasto.fi/dlk01200>