

Overview for Long-Term Care Facilities: **Invasive Group A *Streptococcus***

What is it?

Group A *Streptococcus* (GAS) is a type of bacteria that can cause infection. It's also known as *Streptococcus pyogenes*.

These bacteria can infect people in different ways:

- Common and non-invasive: strep throat, body rash, sores
- Serious and invasive: pneumonia, bacteremia, toxic shock, necrotizing fasciitis (Although rare, these types of infection may result in death.)

Why is this important in long-term care?

- Long-term care facility residents are more at risk for severe, invasive infections due to their age, chronic medical conditions, skin breakdown or skin integrity issues, and their residence in congregate care settings.
- Outbreaks can be particularly devastating in this vulnerable population.

How does it spread?

- GAS is spread by respiratory droplets, direct contact with mucus or secretions of an infected person, or by contact with infected or colonized wounds.
- Outbreaks in healthcare settings have occurred via staff to resident transmission through lapses in infection prevention and control practices.
- Outbreaks typically occur in winter and spring but can occur anytime of year.

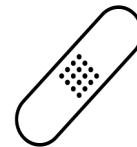
How can it be prevented?



Perform hand hygiene according to [CDC's Clean Hands Count](#).
Hand hygiene is the most effective way of preventing infections.



Maintain transmission-based precautions for known or suspected infections plus standard precautions for all patient encounters.



Maintain aseptic technique while performing wound care.

[\(link to checklist\)](#)

What are some additional recommendations?

- Educate all persons who enter the building (visitors, volunteers, and contractors) on the importance of hand hygiene and staying home while sick.
- Institute employee sick leave policies that discourage employees from working while ill.
- If staff have a wound that cannot be covered or interferes with performing hand hygiene, they should contact their supervisor for modified duties or stay home.



Did you know?

People can carry these bacteria in their throat and never show any signs or symptoms of an infection?

About 5-15% of the general population are asymptomatic carriers.