

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

STREPTOCOCCAL - TOXIC SHOCK SYNDROME

Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome (STSS) is a severe bacterial illness caused by a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus pyogenes*. "Strep" is commonly found in the throat and on the skin. Many healthy people carry strep and never get sick. STSS occurs when the bacteria get inside the body and into the bloodstream.

Symptoms

- Early signs and symptoms of STSS include:
 - Fever, dizziness, and confusion
 - Severe pain, often in an arm or leg that comes on suddenly
 - In some cases, a flat red rash covers large areas of the body
 - Failure of organs (symptoms might include making less urine, unusual bleeding, difficulty breathing, and others)
- STSS may result in death if not promptly diagnosed and treated.

Transmission

- Although strep bacteria are very common, STSS infections only occur when the bacteria get past your body's defenses. The bacteria can get in through a break in the skin or when a person's immune system is decreased due to chronic illnesses or medications.
- Newborn infants may get the bacteria from the mother either in utero or at the time of delivery.
- People who are ill with strep throat or skin infections are most likely to spread the infection. People who have the bacteria on their skin but are not sick are much less contagious.

Treatment

- ALWAYS seek treatment for STSS quickly, because it can get worse rapidly and is often fatal.
- Invasive GAS infections are treated with antibiotics. People with STSS need intensive care, intravenous fluids and other supportive measures to manage shock and multi-organ failure.

Prevention

- The spread of all types of GAS infection can be reduced by good hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing and before preparing foods or eating.
- Wash wounds with soap and water and keep covered with clean, dry bandage.
- Persons with sore throats should be seen by a doctor who can perform tests to find out whether the illness is strep throat. If the test result shows strep throat, the person should stay home from work, school, or day care until 24 hours after taking an antibiotic.

Additional Information

STSS is caused by a different bacteria than "toxic shock syndrome" which has been associated with tampon usage. Also see fact sheet for Streptococcal disease, group A, invasive (IGAS)

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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