



# Westby Area Schools



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## **Streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep throat)**

**Dear parent/guardian,**

**Your child may have been exposed to strep throat at school. Please read the following information and watch your child for signs and symptoms of strep throat.**

*What is strep throat?*

- Strep throat is an infection of the throat and tonsils caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pyogenes* (Group A streptococci).
- If left untreated, strep throat lasts 2 to 5 days; with antibiotic treatment it lasts about 1 to 3 days.

*What are symptoms of strep throat?*

- Symptoms can include: sore throat, pain when swallowing, fever, swollen and tender lymph nodes in the neck, and fatigue.
- The tonsils are swollen and often covered with white patches.
- The roof of the mouth may have tiny red spots (petechiae).

\*A cough, hoarseness, and a runny nose are NOT symptoms of strep throat, but indicate viral upper respiratory infections.

*When does a person get strep throat?*

- Strep throat is usually the result of direct contact with another person who has strep throat.
- Anyone can get strep throat, but the infection is most common in school-age children.

*How is strep throat diagnosed?*

- Strep throat is diagnosed by culturing a swab of the throat. If a person has strep throat, treatment will either be a single injection of penicillin or a 10-day course of antibiotics. It is important to take all of the antibiotics.

*How long is a person with strep throat considered infectious?*

- A person with strep throat is non-infectious after 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic therapy. Children with strep throat should not return to school until after they have completed 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and the fever has resolved.

*What are the possible complications of strep throat?*

- Rheumatic fever is a serious complication that may rarely occur among untreated cases of strep throat. The valves of the heart may be permanently damaged by rheumatic fever. It often develops 2-5 weeks after strep throat.
- Post-strep glomerulonephritis is a very rare complication that follows roughly 10 days after the onset of strep throat and results in temporary kidney failure.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Jothen, RN  
Westby School District Nurse