

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

TEL: 905-825-6000 • TOLL FREE: 1-866-442-5866 • FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

FROM: Dr. Deepika Lobo, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: May 3, 2023

RE: Increase in Invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) in Halton

QUICK FACTS

- The number of Invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) cases reported to Halton Region Public Health has increased compared to the same time in previous years.
- Some of these cases have resulted in death.
- Please **ensure prompt diagnosis and treatment of Group A Streptococcus (GAS)**.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- GAS causes common infections such as strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, and cellulitis and is spread by contact with infected secretions such as respiratory or wound exudates.
- Serious invasive infection (i.e. iGAS) can progress very quickly over 12 to 24 hours when the bacteria invades a sterile site such as blood or fascia and can proceed to sepsis, necrotizing fasciitis (flesh eating disease), toxic shock syndrome, or death.
- Symptoms of iGAS may include, fever, chills, headache, rapid breathing and increased heart rate, severe pain and swelling, redness around a wound, confusion or a flat red rash over large area of the body.
- The contagious period of GAS infection in untreated, uncomplicated cases is 10 to 21 days. With adequate treatment, the contagious period generally ends within 24 hours.
- Close contacts are recommended to monitor for signs and symptoms of GAS for 30 days after exposure and prophylaxis may be recommended for certain close contacts
- Varicella infection is a known risk factor and practitioners are asked to continue and encourage routine and catch-up immunizations.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Group A streptococcal disease, invasive](#), Halton Region Public Health
- [Canadian Immunization Guide - Canada.ca](#)
- [Invasive group A streptococcal disease: Management and chemoprophylaxis | Canadian Paediatric Society \(cps.ca\)](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (only report COVID-19 cases occurring in high-risk settings) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.