



We need to talk about Severe Group A Strep (GAS) Infections and Other Secondary Bacterial Infections

Severe GAS including invasive disease (iGAS)¹ means that germs invade parts of the body that are normally free from germs.

The disease is usually very severe, requiring care in a hospital and even causing death in some cases.



The CDC states:

- CDC is looking into an increase in invasive group A strep (iGAS) infections in children in the United States.
- iGAS infections include necrotizing fasciitis and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome².



What our front-line healthcare workers are seeing:

- Necrotizing fasciitis and streptococcal toxic shock syndrome are rare.
- Certain regions including but not limited to the UK and EU are seeing increases in iGAS.
- There is a suspected increase in secondary bacterial pneumonia being investigated by **UKHSA** among other agencies.
- The influenza and COVID-19 virus may increase severe outcomes from GAS and other secondary bacterial infections.

Though rare, iGAS can lead to life-threatening illness and death

Severe GAS and other types of streptococcal infections can sometimes be related to³:



Bacterial pneumonia



Acute rheumatic fever



Rheumatic heart disease

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, December 22). Increase in invasive group A strep infections, 2022-2023. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/groupastrep/igas-infections-investigation.html>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, November 23). Group A streptococcal (GAS) disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/groupastrep/index.html>

³ World Health Organization. (n.d.). Increased incidence of scarlet fever and invasive group A streptococcus infection - multi-country. World Health Organization. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2022-DON429>



The experts' advice⁴:

- 01** Detecting severe GAS infections and other secondary bacterial pneumonias using a stethoscope is not always possible. Chest X-rays can increase early identification and appropriate treatment of potential cases.
The speed at which the disease can progress to a life-threatening state may range from insidious to rapid decompensation, and co-infection with viruses means that symptoms may mimic respiratory viruses. Our medical communities need strategies to ensure that cases are not identified too late.
- 02** Although recognition and treatment of potential bacterial coinfections is important, clinicians should also consider the treatment of potential underlying viral processes.
- 03** To avoid the overuse of antibiotics, routine cultures are advisable in patients hospitalized with influenza, particularly those started on antibiotic therapy.

We know how to mitigate the effects of iGAS



Get vaccinated

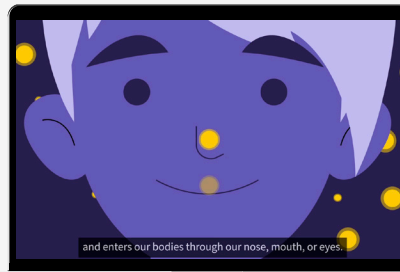
Make sure everyone in the household is up to date with influenza, COVID-19, and chickenpox vaccines, since getting these infections can increase the risk of getting an iGAS infection.



Create awareness about amoxicillin shortage

According to the CDC, there is a national shortage of the liquid antibiotic (amoxicillin suspension) most often prescribed to children to treat group A strep infections.

The shortage is anticipated to last several months.



Implement the 4 Ds

Reducing exposure to an infectious disease is the most important thing you can do to reduce its spread.

Watch this video to understand and assess your risk:

[WATCH NOW](#)

⁴13 Jan 2023 episode 306 streptococcus pneumoniae. ICPCovid. (n.d.). Retrieved January 19, 2023, from <https://www.icpcovid.com/en/news/13-jan-2023-episode-306-streptococcus-pneumoniae>