

December 6, 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

A number of students at our school have been diagnosed and treated for strep infections. Strep infections are caused by bacteria called Group A *Streptococcus*. These bacteria are often found in the throat and on the skin, and they don't always cause illness. When people do get sick from strep, they typically have mild illnesses like strep throat or impetigo, a skin infection. Some strep infections, however, can be more severe. Because strep infections are caused by bacteria, they should be treated with antibiotics to prevent more severe illness and complications.

Symptoms of strep throat include throat pain, difficulty swallowing, red and swollen tonsils with white patches, tiny red spots on the back of the roof of the mouth, swollen, tender lymph nodes in the neck, fever, headache, rash, and sometimes stomachache. Symptoms of impetigo include blisters filled with a yellow or honey-colored fluid that may ooze or crust over. Blisters are typically located on the face, hands or feet and may cause itching. Symptoms such as a mild sore throat along with a runny nose, cough and congestion are usually not caused by strep.

Strep infections are spread by direct contact with body fluids, such as secretions from the nose and throat or a wound of an infected person. Casual contact (as in work and school) rarely plays a role in spreading the bacteria. It usually takes 2 to 5 days from exposure to develop an infection. The risk of spreading the infection is greatest when an individual is ill – people who carry the bacteria but have no symptoms are much less likely to spread the infection to others. The spread of strep may be reduced by good hand washing.

Students diagnosed with strep infections should stay home from school until they have taken antibiotics for at least [12 hours](#), have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen) and can comfortably participate in school activities.

If your child develops symptoms of strep throat, please contact his/her physician for evaluation for diagnosis and treatment, if warranted.

You can learn more at the Virginia Department of Health website: Fact Sheet: [Streptococcal Illness](#). Please feel free to call your school nurse if you have any questions.

Thank you,