



Durham Region Health Department FAX about...

For Health Care Professionals



Increased Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS) in Ontario

On May 23, 2023, the Ontario Ministry of Health released a memorandum to health care providers detailing a trend in increased cases of invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS) in Ontario. Cases have been reported in all age groups but rates of illness are highest in children aged 0 to 4 years and adults 65 years of age and older. **Durham Region has also seen increased cases for all age groups compared to the 2014-2019 seasons (pre COVID-19).**

While iGAS remains relatively uncommon, it can progress quickly and be associated with severe illness like sepsis, soft-tissue necrosis, pneumonia or other life-threatening conditions resulting in death.

Recommended actions for clinicians

Provide prompt assessment and treatment for patients with symptoms of non-invasive GAS (e.g., pharyngitis with consistent findings, skin and soft tissue infections). Note that GAS infections are generally considered non-infectious after 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic treatment.

Be alert to potential complications of GAS infections and consider iGAS as a possible cause of severe illness, particularly in those who may be at increased risk including:

- Infants and young children
- People who are pregnant or postpartum
- Older adults
- Immunocompromised individuals
- People experiencing homelessness and/or using injection drugs
- Individuals with recent viral infection (e.g., chickenpox)

If iGAS is suspected, obtain appropriate specimens for routine bacterial culture or DNA detection by nucleic acid amplification testing (NAAT).

Clinical management of severe iGAS disease involves supportive treatment (e.g., fluids), antimicrobials and measures to minimize the effects of toxin production when indicated (e.g., IVIG). Early diagnosis and aggressive management can be critical, including in the peripartum period. Consultation with an infectious diseases physician should be considered for management of patients with suspected iGAS.

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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



Educate patients and/or parent/guardians on the signs and symptoms of serious bacterial infections as well as when to seek urgent medical attention.

Support your patients in keeping up-to-date on routine immunizations, in particular varicella immunization when indicated, and offer influenza vaccination for eligible patients when available.

Reporting

iGAS is an **immediately reportable** disease in Ontario. Please continue to report any cases of iGAS to DRHD.

- Phone: 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 ext. 2996
- After Hours Phone: 905-576-9991 or 1-800-372-1104
- Confidential Fax: 905-666-6215
- Access the Notification Form for Diseases of Public Health Significance at www.durham.ca/hcp (under Forms, Reporting)

Additional Information

Please also see the PHO Summary [Invasive Group A Streptococcal \(iGAS\) Disease in Ontario: October 1, 2022 to April 30, 2023](#) for additional information.

Access Durham Region Health Department fact sheet about Group A Streptococcal Infection at durham.ca/FactsAbout

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