

SURGE OF STREP

IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Strep throat is an infection in the throat and tonsils caused by bacteria called group A Streptococcus (group A strep). Group A strep bacteria **IS** very contagious. The bacteria **IS SPREAD** to others through respiratory droplets or direct contact with fluid from sores on the skin. Group A strep bacteria often live in the nose and throat.

You can see that there have been over 30 outbreaks of strep throat reported in educational settings to New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) this year.

While individual cases of strep throat are not reportable, outbreaks of any illness are reportable to the local health department where your school is located. If you suspect an outbreak, please call your local health department.

New Jersey Statewide Strep Throat Outbreaks in Educational Settings



What preventive measures should a school take?

NJDOH recommends that schools and childcare settings increase education on respiratory hygiene. Staff and children should be taught and asked to follow these steps that prevent the transmission of infectious diseases such as strep throat:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into your sleeve, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you're sick, especially with a fever.

Additional preventive measures include:

- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Have an adequate supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes.
- Adhere to exclusion recommendations from public health, for strep throat: at least 12–24 hours have passed since they started their antibiotic treatment **AND** they feel well enough to participate in their normal activities **AND** have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medications.

For more information on prevention and control of communicable diseases in schools, visit:

www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/schoolhealth.shtml



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