

# Increase in Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS)

Update to York Region health care professionals as of May 29, 2023

- Ontario is reporting an [increase in iGAS cases](#) in all age groups, with the highest rates of illness in individuals aged 0-4 and over 65
- Provide prompt assessment and treatment for patients with non-invasive GAS infections (e.g., strep throat, skin and soft tissue infections) and be alert for signs and symptoms of iGAS, especially in those at higher risk.

## GAS and iGAS

GAS is a common cause of bacterial infections (e.g., strep pharyngitis, impetigo, scarlet fever, cellulitis). While iGAS remains relatively uncommon, it can progress quickly and may be associated with streptococcal toxic shock syndrome (STSS), sepsis, soft tissue necrosis (including necrotizing fasciitis), meningitis, pneumonia and other life-threatening conditions.

## People who are at an increased risk

- Infants and children aged 0-4 years old
- Older adults aged 65 and older
- People who are pregnant or postpartum
- People with immunocompromising conditions
- People experiencing homelessness
- People who use injection drugs
- Chickenpox and other preceding or concurrent viral infections have also been noted in some patients with iGAS

## Measures to be taken by health care professionals

- Provide prompt assessment and treatment for patients with non-invasive GAS (e.g., pharyngitis with consistent findings, skin and soft tissue infections)
- Consider iGAS as a possible complication of GAS infection, especially for patients at increased risk
- Support patients to keep routine immunizations up-to-date, especially varicella immunization and offer influenza vaccinations for eligible patients
- For more details on iGAS testing and clinical management, refer to the Chief Medical Officer of Health's May 23 memo "Increased Invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease in Ontario"
- Report any suspected iGAS infections to your local Public Health Unit

### York Region Public Health, Infectious Diseases Control Division

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After hours, including weekends and holidays

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