



PHYSICAL THREAT BULLETINS

Physical Security Bulletin - Strep Throat Increase, Antibiotic Shortage



TLP:WHITE

Apr 26, 2023

Summary:

Streptococcus or strep throat has seen a steep increase this last season and is lasting much longer than the usually patterned strep season. The usual seasonal pattern shows a rise in September and a peak in February, though strep cases this year are still persistent. This last February saw an increase of 30% compared to the last peak of pre-pandemic of February 2017. A more infectious variant of strep throat called strep A is also being seen in larger numbers. The variant has the ability to travel throughout the body, infecting the blood and causing rashes. Strep A shares the same treatment as Streptococcus. There has also been a shortage of amoxicillin, the antibiotic used to treat strep throat, which is exacerbating the issue that has been caused by the steep increase in cases. Amoxicillin is the preferred antibiotic treatment for strep throat as it is a liquid, and easy to take while dealing with the infection.

Analysis:

The increase in strep throat cases is thought to be tied to the pandemic. During the last three years, people have been quarantined or avoiding contact and ensuring that everything stayed sanitized including themselves. These practices helped to prevent the spread of infections such as Streptococcus. With the end of Covid restrictions with individuals being more relaxed about sanitization and staying apart from other people, there is much more exposure to infection across the board. Scientists studying the increase in numbers also believe that it may be tied to a lack of exposure over the last few years, making immune systems more susceptible to the infection. The antibiotic shortage is not being tied to an inability to produce more antibiotics; however, it is based on a lack of foresight by manufacturing pharmaceutical suppliers. Companies will generally look at production from the previous years to anticipate a pattern of need and produce based on those statistics. With lower numbers in recent years, companies did not anticipate such a large increase in infections in order to produce more antibiotics.

Mitigation:

Facilities should continue to anticipate increased numbers of strep cases compared to previous years. Strep A is also at a much higher rate, and with a slightly different set of symptoms, professionals should ensure they are not misdiagnosing these cases. Facilities should also be prepared for antibiotic shortages by ensuring they are stocking enough, while also not overstocking. This can run the risk of preventing other facilities from being able to receive the antibiotics they need to treat their patients.

Sources:

[Strep Throat Cases Are 30 Percent Higher Than Previous Peak in 2017](#)

[Strep throat infections have spiked above pre-COVID highs, says report: 'We've missed cases'](#)

[Strep throat infections remain at five-YEAR high in the US... here's what to watch out for](#)

[Strep is bad right now — and an antibiotic shortage is making it worse](#)

[New data shows strep cases have reached 6-year high](#)

[Strep cases are surging — and antibiotics are in short supply](#)

Reference(s)

[everydayhealth](#), [NPR](#), [wkyt](#), [Daily Mail UK](#),
[advisory](#), [Fox News](#)

Alert ID 0a87149e

[View Alert](#)

Tags Shortage, Amoxicillin, Antibiotics, Strep Throat, Streptococcus, Strep A, Strep, Increase

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