



QUICK FACTS ABOUT....

Diphtheria

What is diphtheria?

Diphtheria is a disease caused by bacteria that can affect the tonsils, throat, voice box, nose, other mucous membranes or skin, and sometimes it affects the conjunctivae (lining of the eyelid) or genitalia.

What are the symptoms of diphtheria?

Symptoms may develop slowly and include:

- headache and general discomfort;
- fever of 100° to 101° F;
- sore throat, with a yellow-white or gray membrane-like covering; may also be swollen lymph nodes in the neck; and
- in some types of diphtheria, there may be a clear discharge (that may have some blood) coming from the nose.

How is diphtheria spread?

Diphtheria is spread through direct contact with an infected person, or it can be spread by contact with items that an infected person's draining sores have touched.

How is diphtheria treated?

People who have diphtheria must be put into the hospital for medical attention. There are drugs that treat diphtheria that will be administered at the hospital.

How can diphtheria be prevented?

Make sure that you are current on your tetanus-diphtheria (Td) shot (every 10 years), and that your child is current on their DTP or Td series.

References:

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
[Indiana State Department of Health](#)