Group A Streptococcus (GAS) in Long-term Care Facilities

Key points for staff to know

• **Group A strep (GAS) bacteria** cause different forms of illnesses including strep throat and cellulitis (skin infection), as well as more severe invasive illnesses. Severe infections are life-threatening and need immediate treatment.

• **LTC residents are particularly vulnerable to** invasive GAS due to advanced age and other risk factors such as wounds and immunocompromised status.

• GAS spreads easily in long-term care facilities and can be transmitted from person to person via respiratory droplets, contaminated hands, and improper wound care practices.

Follow these steps to keep yourself and your residents safe:

- Perform hand hygiene often. Be sure to include thumbs, fingertips and between fingers.
- Follow facility protocols while performing wound care.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently, making sure to leave the disinfectant wet for the entire contact time.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Hand hygiene reminders

• Wear gloves any time you may be exposed to blood or body fluids, including when bathing or showering residents.
• Always perform hand hygiene (use alcohol-based hand rub or wash hands) before putting on gloves and after removing gloves.
• Always change gloves between residents and if gloves are soiled.
• Always perform hand hygiene before and after contact with a resident or their environment if gloves are not needed.
• Alcohol-based hand rub is usually the preferred method of hand hygiene.
• Wash hands with soap and water if visibly soiled and after eating/drinking or using the restroom.