What is Group A Streptococcus (GAS)?
Group A Streptococcus, or group A Strep, is a bacterium called *Streptococcus pyogenes* that is found in the human throat or on the skin.

What human diseases are caused by GAS?
While some people infected with GAS have no clinical signs, the most common GAS illnesses include strep throat, impetigo, and scarlet fever.

- Strep throat is characterized by swollen tonsils and lymph nodes, sore throat, fever and/or headache. This illness is common in children between 6 and 12 years of age.
- Impetigo is a skin infection with open draining sores and often includes fever, sore throat, and swollen lymph nodes.
- Scarlet fever includes fever, sore throat, red “strawberry” tongue, and a red sandpapery rash.

If left untreated, serious complications can result from GAS infections, including glomerulonephritis, in which the kidneys are affected, and rheumatic fever, which can damage the heart valves.

Immunocompromised people are also at risk of developing pneumonia, meningitis, skin and muscle infection (necrotizing fasciitis), and Streptococcal Toxic Shock Syndrome.

How is GAS transmitted in people?
GAS is usually spread by direct contact with secretions, such as mucus, from an infected person, less commonly by contacting surfaces contaminated with secretions, and rarely via contaminated food. The incubation period (time from exposure to illness) is typically 2 to 5 days.

How is GAS treated in people?
Penicillin or amoxicillin is the antibiotic of choice, except in the case of an allergy to penicillin.

Does Strep A occur in dogs?
While there may be rare exceptions, dogs are not believed to carry or become infected with GAS. In a study of 230 dogs and cats from households with and without children with *Strep* throat, no GAS was found in any of the animals.

What might be the symptoms of *Strep* A in my dog, if it were to occur?
Since *Strep* A has rarely been isolated from dogs, it is not believed to cause disease in dogs. Other streptococcal organisms can cause a variety of infections in dogs.

How can I prevent the (unlikely) transmission of *Strep* A to or from my dog?
As a general rule, dogs should not be allowed to lick people’s faces or wounds. Regular handwashing is always important in preventing disease transmission, especially when household members are known to be sick.

Additional Information:
- CDC Group A Streptococcal (GAS) Disease

*This fact sheet is meant to provide basic information. For specific health concerns for you or your pet please contact your healthcare provider or veterinarian. Updated 2017.*