

SAFETY ADVISORY : Group A Streptococcus

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION SAFETY ADVISORY

Recently a firefighter was diagnosed with Group A Streptococcus (GAS) Necrotizing Fasciitis, commonly referred to as "flesh-eating bacteria." The firefighter is being treated in a local hospital.

Sometime during a work shift, the firefighter was stung by a bee, but initially had no adverse reaction to the sting. Within the next 24 to 48 hours, the firefighter noticed his hand and arm were swollen and sought medical attention. A diagnosis of GAS Necrotizing Fasciitis was made and the firefighter was transported to a hospital capable of providing the required specialized care. It is possible the bee sting was the entry point for the GAS infection.

The County Health Department tested the crew for signs of infection and all other crewmembers were negative for GAS. The disease is not easily spread and occurs only about 600 times a year in the United States.

The spread of all types of GAS infection can be reduced by good hand washing, especially after coughing and sneezing and before preparing foods or eating. All wounds should be kept clean and watched for possible signs of infection such as redness, swelling, drainage, and pain at the wound site. A person with signs of an infected wound, especially if fever occurs, should seek medical care.

For more information about GAS Necrotizing Fasciitis, please click on the attached link

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/groupastreptococcal_g.htm