

# Get diphtheria outta here!

There's a bad germ spreading sickness through some communities called **diphtheria** (diff-theer-e-uh)

It is a nasty bacteria (germ) that can release a toxin (poison) which can make you very sick



AHCWA

# Symptoms

Know the symptoms so you can get treated quickly



## Skin (cutaneous) diphtheria

The most common diphtheria causes skin infections. This looks like:

- Skin sores and ulcers that aren't getting better

## Throat (respiratory) diphtheria

The most severe type of diphtheria is an infection in the throat.

This looks and feels like:

- Sore throat
- Fever and chills
- Hard to swallow and breathe
- Grey-white coating on the throat
- Swollen, painful glands in neck
- Tiredness
- Not feeling hungry



# How is diphtheria spread?

Diphtheria is very contagious and spread by:



Infected droplets from coughs or sneezes

Skin to skin, from contact with an infected ulcer or sore



Touching dirty sheets, towels, clothes, or household items

# Complications

If not treated quickly, people can have trouble breathing and the diphtheria toxin can enter the bloodstream from a throat infection and damage other parts of the body

## This can lead to:

Damage to the heart

Damage to the nerves causing weakness, choking and difficulty breathing

Long stays in hospital

Death (in severe cases)



# Prevention

## Vaccination is the best protection against diphtheria

The diphtheria vaccine has been around for more than 100 years! It is safe and free for everyone



Make sure kids are up to date with vaccines

Adults need regular boosters – ask your clinic if you are up to date

Where diphtheria is spreading, people may need an extra booster if they haven't had one in the last 5 years

# Treatment

Diphtheria is treated with antibiotics

If you have a throat infection you might need special medicine

People with severe throat infections may need treatment in hospital

People recovering from diphtheria, or who have been in contact with diphtheria, may need a booster jab if they haven't had one in the last 12 months



# Keep mob safe

**Come see the doctor  
if you have a skin  
sore or sore throat**



**Keep your sores  
covered**

**Ask clinic staff if your  
family is up-to-date  
with immunisations**

