**Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS)**

**What is Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections (PANDAS)?**

Pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcal infections (PANDAS) is a term for a disorder in children who have obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), tic disorders, or both and who suddenly develop symptoms or symptoms worsen after being infected with “strep” bacteria (group A beta-hemolytic streptococcus or Group A Strep). Although the mechanism behind this disorder is unclear, researchers are investigating whether PANDAS is an autoimmune disorder triggered by Group A Strep infection (such as “strep throat”).

**Who gets PANDAS?**

PANDAS is most common in children younger than 13 years who have been infected with Group A Strep.

**Can PANDAS be spread from one person to another?**

PANDAS is thought to be the result of an individual’s immune system response to Group A Strep infection. PANDAS is not spread from one person to another.

**What are the symptoms of PANDAS?**

The symptoms of PANDAS include obsessive thoughts, compulsive behaviors and motor or vocal tics. These symptoms may be accompanied by a variety of other neuropsychiatric symptoms.

**How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?**

Children who develop PANDAS usually have an abrupt onset of symptoms. The symptoms usually become more intense within 24-48 hours after the onset of their Group A Strep infection.

**How is PANDAS diagnosed?**

PANDAS is diagnosed by a healthcare provider after evaluating the patient. Although laboratory testing cannot identify PANDAS, it might identify a Group A Strep infection, which precedes PANDAS.

**What is the treatment for PANDAS?**

If a Group A Strep infection is identified, antibiotics may be prescribed to kill the bacteria. Other treatment may be provided based on the patient’s clinical condition.

**What can be done to help prevent PANDAS?**

The likelihood of PANDAS is reduced by limiting the spread of Group A Strep. The spread of Group A
Strep can be reduced by following these tips:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Wash your hands especially after coughing and sneezing, before and after caring for an ill person and before preparing foods and before eating.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (such as kissing, sharing cups, or sharing eating utensils) with sick people.
- Persons with Group A Strep infections should stay home from work, school, or daycare until they have taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours.

**Is there a vaccine to prevent PANDAS?**

A vaccine for Group A Strep is not available.

**How can I learn more about PANDAS?**

For additional information,

- Contact your healthcare provider.
- Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology articles regarding PANDAS and PANS treatment guidelines:
  
  
  

February 2014