

What is toxic shock syndrome?

Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is a serious complication of infection with strains of *Staphylococcus aureus* that produce TSS toxin-1 (TSST-1) or strains of *Streptococcus pyogenes* that produce pyrogenic exotoxin A. *S. pyogenes* is more commonly known as group A *streptococcus* (GAS).

Who is at risk for toxic shock syndrome?

Any one is at risk, however, menstruating women, women who use barrier contraceptive devices, persons who have undergone nasal surgery, and persons with postoperative staphylococcal wound infections are at highest risk.

How do you get toxic shock syndrome?

TSS has been associated with use of tampons and intravaginal contraceptive devices in women and occurs as a complication of skin abscesses or surgery in either sex.

Can toxic shock syndrome be spread from person-to-person?

TSS itself is not communicable from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms of toxic shock syndrome?

Toxic shock syndrome (TSS) is characterized by sudden onset of fever, chills, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle aches and rash. It can rapidly progress to severe and intractable hypotension and multisystem dysfunction.

How soon will symptoms appear?

The incubation period for TSS ranges from 1 - 10 days, on average.

How can toxic shock syndrome be prevented?

To avoid exposure, advise individuals to:

- Use the lowest absorbency tampon and change frequently. Discontinue tampon use *immediately* and call their healthcare provider if they develop a high fever and vomiting or diarrhea during menstruation.
- Follow directions for use of diaphragms or contraceptive sponges and do not leave the device in place for more than 30 hours.
- Complete the full course of treatment if prescribed antibiotics for *staphylococcus* or *streptococcus* infections.