

SYMPTOMS

Signs and symptoms may vary from mild to severe. They usually start two to five days after exposure.

Symptoms often come on fairly gradually, beginning with:
Fever, weakness, sore throat and swollen glands in the neck.

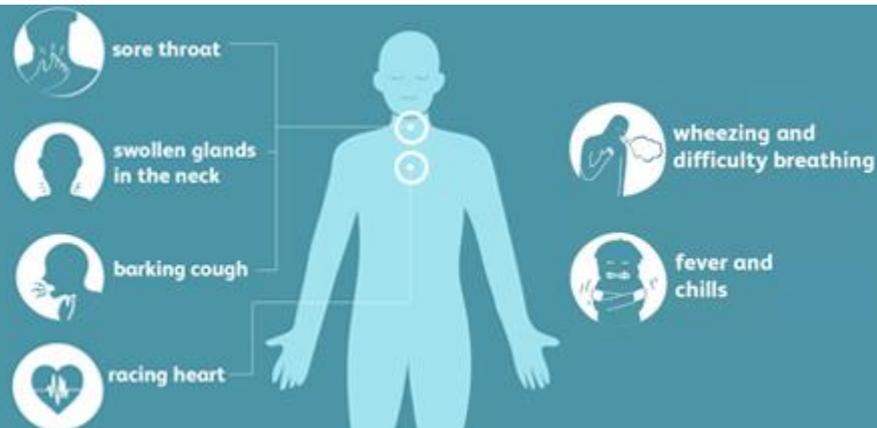
Severe cases:

Grey or white patch develops in the throat. This can block the airway, and create a barking cough as in croup. The neck may swell in part, due to enlarged lymph nodes. A form of diphtheria that involves the skin, eyes, or genitals also exists.

Complications may include:

Peripheral neuropathy, kidney problems, bleeding problems due to low levels of platelets, myocarditis which may result in:

- Abnormal heart rate
- Inflammation of the nerves may result in paralysis.



TRANSMISSION

Distribution and Spread

Diphtheria is an infection caused by *Corynebacterium diphtheria* bacterium.

Human to human transmission of diphtheria typically occurs through the air when an infected individual coughs or sneezes. Inhalation of particles released from the infected individual leads to infection. Contact with any lesions on the skin can also lead to transmit diphtheria, but this is uncommon. Indirect infections can occur, as well, if an infected individual touches a surface or object.

RECOMMENDATION

Treatment

It is important to start treatment immediately. The treatment includes antibiotics and diphtheria antitoxin.

Prevention

Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent diphtheria.

Diphtheria vaccine is usually combined at least with Diphtheria Tetanus vaccine (Td) and often with Pertussis (DTP, DTaP, Tdap) vaccines, as well.

Avoid direct contact with an infected person.