

Mycoplasma Fact Sheet

***Mycoplasma* is a type of bacteria**

Mycoplasma can cause sore throat, bronchitis, and pneumonia.

***Mycoplasma* is usually spread from person-to-person through the air and by direct contact**

Mycoplasma is found in the throat of infected persons and is spread to other people through the air by sneezing or coughing. It can also be spread by touching tissues or other things recently soiled by secretions from the nose or throat of an infected person.

People of any age can get *Mycoplasma*

Children under 5 years usually have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. The illness is recognized more in school-age children and young adults. Occasionally, epidemics can occur, especially in military populations and institutions (colleges, for example) where people live in close quarters. These occur more often in late summer or fall.

Symptoms to look for include:

- Headache
- Tiredness
- Cough, often in spasms
- Chest discomfort
- Sore throat
- Fever

Symptoms start from 6 to 32 days after exposure. The illness can last from a few days to a month or more (especially coughing). Complications do not happen often. No one knows how long an infected person remains contagious, but it is probably less than 20 days.

***Mycoplasma pneumoniae* is usually diagnosed by blood tests and x-ray of the chest**

Treatment is available

The disease can be treated with antibiotics. While antibiotics help an infected person to feel better faster, they do not remove the bacteria from the throat. *Mycoplasma* can remain in the throat for as long as 13 weeks.

Steps to take to prevent the spread of *Mycoplasma* infection

- Cover the mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues when coughing, sneezing, and wiping or blowing the nose and throw them away.
- Wash hands after coughing, sneezing, and wiping or blowing the nose.
- Avoid crowded living and sleeping quarters whenever possible.