

Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Streptococcus pyogenes*)

TSS is caused by a toxin-producing bacteria that is released into the bloodstream which can involve many systems of the body. It can cause severe damage and illness.

Transmission

Although toxic shock syndrome can affect anyone, including men, children, and postmenopausal women, individuals are at higher risk for TSS if they:

- **Use tampons** or other devices, such as menstrual cups.
- **Use vaginal contraceptive sponges.**
- **Have *Staphylococcus aureus* infections.**
- **Have an infection following child birth, abortion, and surgery.**
- **Have a surgical wound or a local infection in the skin or deep tissue.**

Menstruating women who have had TSS, or a prior serious staph or strep infection, should not use tampons.

Symptoms

Symptoms of TSS usually occur about two days after infection and may include:

- **Fever**
- **Muscle aches**
- **Drop in blood pressure**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Red rash** often after the onset of symptoms
- **Peeling skin** one to two weeks after onset
- **Headache**
- **Confusion**

Severe cases may include:

- **Very low blood pressure**
- **Organ failure**

Diagnosis

Health care providers can diagnose TSS based on symptoms or through diagnostic tests. Contact your provider immediately if you suspect TSS, it can quickly progress to a life-threatening disease.

Prevention

- **Follow manufacturer's instructions** if using tampons, diaphragms and vaginal contraceptive sponges, as to how long to leave the products in place.
- **Contact health-care provider immediately** if you develop a fever a high fever with vomiting and diarrhea.

- **Use the lowest absorbency tampon possible.**

Treatment

Toxic shock syndrome is treated with antibiotics. Supportive treatment also may be needed, such as fluid replacement. Immune globulin may be used to treat the infection.

If you have further questions about the treatment of your TTS, contact your health care provider.

Exclusion Guidance

Individuals with TTS should not be excluded from work, school, or child care unless [general exclusions](#) apply.

For additional information about TTS, contact North Dakota Health and Human Services' Division of Public Health at 800.427.2180.

Resources:

1. Kimberlin, D. W., Barnett, E. D., Lynfield, R., Sawyer, M. H. (2021) Red Book: 2021-2024 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 32nd ed. American Academy of Pediatrics. [[Management and Prevention of Infectious Diseases](#)] [pages [122-133](#)]
2. John Hopkins. (2019, November 19) *Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS)*. Johns Hopkins Medicine. Retrieved June 2nd, 2023, from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/toxic-shock-syndrome-tss>.
3. Mayo Clinic. (2022, March 23) *Toxic shock syndrome - Symptoms and causes - Mayo Clinic*. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved June 2nd, 2023, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/toxic-shock-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20355384>.