DIPHTHERIA

What is diphtheria?
Diphtheria is a disease caused by a bacteria which affects the tonsils, throat, nose or skin.

How is diphtheria spread?
Diphtheria may be spread to others through close contact with droplets from an infected person’s nose, throat, skin, eyes and skin sores.

What are possible symptoms?
Symptoms may include:
- Sore throat
- Grayish white membrane in the back of the throat
- Chills
- Fever
- Swollen glands in the neck
- Skin sores

How is diphtheria diagnosed?
By an examination (identification of grayish white membrane in the back of the throat) and by laboratory tests.

What is the treatment for diphtheria?
Antibiotics and diphtheria antitoxin.

How can I prevent diphtheria?
Vaccine is available to prevent diphtheria. The vaccine should normally be given at 2, 4, 6 and 15-18 months of age, and between 4-6 years of age. The immunity decreases over time, so it is important for adults to get a booster every 10 years.

For more information on diphtheria:
Ottawa County Health Department
www.miOttawa.org
Medline Plus/National Institutes of Health