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## HEALTH NEWS

# Strep A outbreaks avoid Oregon

*Sacred Heart Medical Center has not seen any cases of the deadly flesh-eating bacteria*

By Teri Meeuwse  
Higher Education Reporter

At one time or another, many students have suffered from strep throat. A sore throat, feeling lousy and a raspy voice are some of the normal symptoms. But for some extremely rare cases, this list of symptoms includes death.

There has been an outbreak of strep A, or streptococcus bacteria, in Texas in the last three months, infecting 117 Texans and killing 26 people, including nine children, according to a March 10 Washington Post article.

In the past, Texas has reported 80 to 100 cases a year. Only in the past couple of years have doctors begun reporting all strep A cases to state health departments, so it is difficult to say how real the apparent increase is in Texas, the article said.

Fortunately, March data suggests case numbers in Texas are dropping, said Doug McBride, a

spokesman for the Texas Health Department, in the article.

There have been reports of two or three clusters of cases in Illinois as well, Dr. Emilio Debess, an epidemiologist with the Oregon Health Division said. The number of cases is also higher than usual, he said.

In Oregon, however, the numbers haven't increased, he said.

"We haven't seen anything above and beyond the number of cases we usually see," he said. "We are keeping a surveillance in the tri-county area."

The bacterium that causes strep throat, Group A streptococcus, is relatively common, Debess said. It can be found in the mouth and nasal passages of about one-fifth of the population at any given time. Only occasionally does it become strep throat, and it is usually easily treated with penicillin.

However, when Group A strep mutates into a very dangerous variant called M1 or when the victim is unable to fight off the attack, strep A turns invasive and potentially deadly. The bacteria then gets into the bloodstream or

other sterile fluids in the body and causes an infection.

The microbes can release potent toxins, causing a life-threatening collapse of several organ systems, which could cause liver disease and hypertension or destroy deep tissues in the body. That rare outcome has led to the bacteria's nickname: flesh-eating strep.

Sacred Heart Medical Center hasn't received any recent cases of the strep A bacteria, said communications director Dan Steinberg.

"There's a doctor down in the emergency room who sees just about everything that comes into the hospital, and he said he hasn't seen any cases involving the strep A bacteria," Steinberg said.

There are studies being done on those who are suffering from the strep A bacteria, Debess said, but there is still no answer to what caused the outbreaks.

"The most important thing for people to know is that the increases are very rare situations and the likelihood is still very small," he said. "We don't have a problem in Oregon."

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## Last minute Course Suggestions from the Department of English

The following spring courses have spaces available for qualified students, but we encourage you to decide soon—some are close to being full. And don't forget, the **English Minor is back!** Check the UO Bulletin, page 88, for details.

| Course      | Title                              | Time    | CRN   | Instructor |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---------|-------|------------|
| English 300 | Introduction to Lit Criticism      | MWFe11  | 32595 | Gilcrest   |
| English 315 | Women's Migration Narratives       | MWFe9   | 36420 | Wood       |
| English 391 | American Novel                     | UH12:30 | 32601 | Fehlner    |
| English 394 | 20th-Century Literature            | UH9:30  | 32603 | Gage       |
| English 399 | Female Stars                       | UH11    | 36482 | Karlyn     |
| English 408 | Career/Alumni Mentor Prgm (5 mtgs) | He2     | 36424 | Stevenson  |
| English 410 | Non-Canonical Renaissance          | UH3:30  | 36335 | Grudin     |
| English 410 | Natural History & American Lit     | UH12:30 | 36365 | Sayre      |
| English 422 | History of the English Language    | MWFe11  | 36425 | Bayless    |
| English 440 | 17th-Century Poetry & Prose        | MWFe10  | 32629 | Rockett    |
| English 469 | Literature & the Environment       | MWFe10  | 36431 | Crosswhite |
| English 477 | Modern Drama                       | UH11    | 36433 | Kintz      |
| English 479 | Virginia Woolf                     | MWFe9   | 36392 | Westling   |
| English 479 | Thoreau                            | MWFe3   | 36435 | Rossi      |
| English 489 | Historical Fiction                 | UH11    | 36437 | Huhndorf   |
| English 490 | The Musical                        | UH2     | 36399 | Karlyn     |
| Writing 320 | Scientific & Technical Writing     | MWFe9   | 35398 | Fagan      |

There are also spaces available in the following lower division courses:

| Course      | Title                            |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| English 109 | World Literature                 |
| English 199 | The Action Film                  |
| English 199 | Practical Grammar                |
| English 207 | Shakespeare I                    |
| English 208 | Shakespeare II                   |
| English 211 | Survey of English Literature II  |
| English 215 | Survey of American Literature I  |
| English 216 | Survey of American Literature II |

Consult Duck Hunt by phone or Website for details.

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