



Dear Parent / Carer,

You may have seen recent news reports concerning cases of suspected or confirmed scarlet fever. This has also been referred to as "Strep A". We are writing to inform you that there has been some increase nationally in notifications of scarlet fever to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), above seasonal expected levels.

We would like to take this opportunity to provide some information about this illness, and to raise your awareness of the signs and symptoms to look out for.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others. The symptoms of scarlet fever include:

- fever – a raised temperature
- a sore throat
- headache
- nausea
- vomiting.

After 12 to 48 hours a red, pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, then rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, and giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. On more darkly pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a swollen red tongue.

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever, please take the following actions:

- see your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor
- stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection
- inform the school if it is a confirmed case of scarlet fever/strep A by your doctor

### **Complications**

Children who have had chickenpox recently are more likely to develop more serious infection during an outbreak of scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as:

- a persistent high fever
- cellulitis (skin infection)
- arthritis (joint pain and swelling).

If you are concerned for any reason, please seek medical assistance immediately. If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

You can find more information in the guidance: [Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment](#). Further advice can also be obtained from the Health Protection Team during office hours. Please see below for links to further information and FAQs.

In school, staff will continue to be vigilant about looking for symptoms and encouraging pupils to maintain good hand hygiene. Hand washing remains the most important step in preventing such infections. Staff and pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands at the start of the school day, after using the toilet, after play, before and after eating, and at the end of the school day. Hand sanitiser is available.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Cook

**Further information:**

[Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment](#)

[Scarlet Fever Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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