



Chief Executive
Maxine Holdsworth

Director of Public Health
Anna Raleigh

FAO:
All parents and carers of children
attending nurseries and schools in
Kensington and Chelsea

Thursday 8th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Scarlet Fever and invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)

You will have seen media reports over the weekend that tragically some children have died as a result of being infected with Group A Strep. This is the bacteria that can cause scarlet fever and severe sore throats. I would like to remind you of the symptoms to look out for, and what to do should your children become unwell.

Group A Strep infection is usually a mild illness that can be easily treated with antibiotics. But in rare circumstances, this bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause serious illness – called invasive Group A strep. This is still uncommon. However, it is important that parents and carers are on the lookout for symptoms and see a doctor as quickly as possible so that their child can be treated, and we can stop the infection becoming serious.

Symptoms

The first signs of scarlet fever can be flu-like symptoms, including a high temperature, a sore throat and swollen neck glands (a large lump on the side of your neck). A rash appears 12 to 48 hours later. It looks like small, raised bumps and starts on the chest and tummy, then spreads. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually. On all skin types it will have a sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever. Early treatment with antibiotics is important to reduce any risk of complications.

If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home for at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others. Please also inform your school or nursery.

If you think your child is getting worse

Make sure you talk to a health professional (NHS 111 or your GP) if your child is showing signs of deteriorating after a bout of scarlet fever, a sore throat, or a respiratory

infection. If you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

Stopping the spread of infections

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading infections.

Sources of advice on how to manage childhood illnesses

For more advice and advice in other languages about childhood illnesses and how to manage them, visit the NHS website [Scarlet fever - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

Yours faithfully,

Anna Raleigh
Director of Public Health

Communications for school nurses, teachers and parents

UPDATE TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, TEACHERS and SCHOOL NURSES

You may have seen in the news that there has been an increase of Group A streptococcus (strep A) cases. It is responsible for infections such as tonsillitis, pharyngitis, scarlet fever, impetigo and cellulitis among others.

This is usually a mild illness but can sometimes result in a serious infection.

Look out for symptoms in your child, which include:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- A fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel.
- On darker skin the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel.

Currently, there is no evidence that a new strain is circulating.

It's always concerning when a child is unwell. Strep A infections cause various symptoms such as sore throat, fever, chills and muscle aches.

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- your child is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other [signs of dehydration](#)
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, [tongue or lips are blue](#)
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

How can we stop infections from spreading?

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many bugs. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up, or spreading, infections.

- The UK Health Security Agency (UKSA) have produced a helpful video that you can view [HERE](#).
- Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust have created a useful guide for parents and carers of children under five years of age that can be downloaded [HERE](#).
- NHS North West London continuously update its website with information and support materials: <https://www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk/>