

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s),

We are writing to you to give you information about the increase in scarlet fever in the UK and in Hull.

In this letter, we provide information about the signs and symptoms to look for and the actions to take if you think you or your child might have scarlet fever or invasive Group A Strep.

## Scarlet fever

### What is scarlet fever?

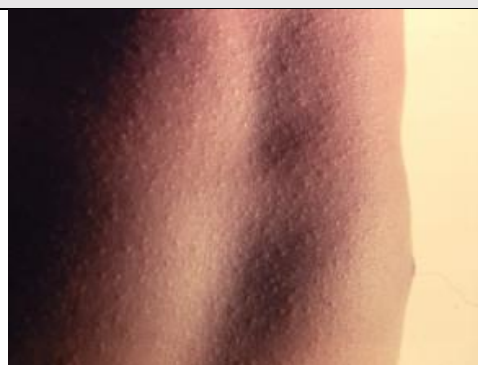
- A common childhood infection caused by a bacteria called group A streptococcus (GAS)
- GAS can also cause [impetigo](#) (a skin infection) and a [sore throat](#) (Strep)
- It is not usually serious but can make people feel poorly and unwell
- People with scarlet fever should be treated with antibiotics to help their symptoms and help stop spreading the bacteria to other people

### Signs of scarlet fever:

- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea and being sick
- Flushed cheeks
- Red tongue with a white coating (called “Strawberry tongue”)
- Red and rough rash on the chest and stomach – this can spread to other parts of the body too.

### Scarlet fever rash – sandpaper rash which is rough to touch and can be red

On white skin the rash looks pink or red. It may be harder to see on brown and black skin, but you can still feel it.



*Images from NHS and Healthline Media*

**Strawberry tongue - A white coating on the tongue which peels, leaving the tongue red, swollen and covered in little bumps.**



*Images from NHS and Indian Journal of Epidemiology*

### **What to do if you think your child might have scarlet fever?**

- Contact your GP or NHS 111 as soon as possible if your child has these symptoms
- Take all of the antibiotics given to you by the doctor – you must complete the full course of medication to get rid of the infection fully.
- Stay at home for at least 24 hours (1 day) after starting antibiotics to avoid spreading the infection.
- If after 24 hours on antibiotics your child feels better and well, they can return to nursery/school
- If your child has scarlet fever but does not get antibiotics, they need to stay away from nursery/school until they are completely better. They will be infectious to others for 2-3 weeks.

More information about [scarlet fever](#) can be found on the NHS website.

### **Invasive Group A Strep**

#### **What is invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)?**

- A rare and uncommon but serious illness
- The bacteria – Group A Streptococcus - gets into the bloodstream and invades the body
- This year there have been more cases of iGAS than earlier years but it is still very rare
- It can happen if a child has chicken pox and scarlet fever at the same time

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

#### **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

### **Other winter illnesses**

It is winter-time and so there are lots of colds and flu about. If your child is not feeling well, please keep them off and away from nursery/school until they are feeling better.

Most winter illness are common and usually people get better without any medical help.

More information about common illnesses including [flu](#), [chickenpox](#) and [diarrhoea and vomiting](#) can be found on the NHS website.

Yours sincerely



**Julia Weldon**  
**Director of Public Health**