

## Update on scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious. Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called **group A streptococci**. These bacteria also cause other respiratory and skin infections such as strep throat and impetigo.

If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 48 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

There were 851 cases reported week beginning 14 November in the UK, compared to an average of 186 for the preceding years.



### How to spot scarlet fever

- Fine red rash, feels like sandpaper
- White coating on tongue that peels after few days leaving it swollen and red (AKA "strawberry tongue")
- Fever over 38.3 C (101F)
- Flushed red face, but pale around mouth
- Swollen glands on neck

BBBC NEWS

Look out for the following symptoms in your child:

- a sore throat
- headache
- fever
- along with 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.



As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell or you suspect they have scarlet fever, you should trust your own judgement, early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection. 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 38°C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39°C 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

Please remember that there are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, colds and coughs circulating. **These should resolve without medical intervention.**

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.