

# Group A Streptococcal Infection

## What is Group A Streptococcal infection?

Group A streptococci (GAS) are a type of bacteria and is spread by close contact between individuals, through respiratory droplets and direct skin contact. GAS infection is contagious.

## Scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious. It is a bacterial infection.

- Sore throat, headache, and 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.

Contact NHS 111 or GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scarlet-fever-managing-outbreaks-in-schools-and-nurseries>

## Sore throat/ tonsillitis

Most sore throats are viral however, some can be bacterial especially if white pus present.

- a painful throat especially when swallowing, a dry scratchy throat, redness in the back of your mouth, bad breath, a mild cough, swollen neck glands and fever

Contact NHS 111 or GP if your sore throat does not improve after a week, you often get sore throats, you have a sore throat and a very high temperature, or you feel hot and shivery or you have a weakened immune system – for example, because of diabetes or chemotherapy. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/>

You do not normally need antibiotics for a sore throat because they will not usually relieve your symptoms or speed up your recovery. They'll only be prescribed if a GP thinks you could have a bacterial infection.

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat but if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away. A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of tonsillitis.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

## What is Invasive Group A Streptococcal Infection?

Very rarely, GAS can also cause more serious or 'invasive' infection (iGAS). Where iGAS infection occurs, the bacteria may produce toxins and may cause a number of severe and sometimes fatal conditions such as:

- An infection of the bloodstream
- Severe infection which spreads to areas of soft tissue below the skin.
- Toxic shock syndrome. This is rare but can cause rapidly progressive symptoms of faintness, vomiting, diarrhoea, high fever, rash and confusion.

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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ukhsa-update-on-scarlet-fever-and-invasive-group-a-strep>