

Strep A and Scarlet Fever Facts

Lizzie Naylor Head of Infection prevention & Control Hammersmith & Fulham council

Group A streptococcal infection



You may have seen in the news that nationally there have been deaths in children from invasive Group A Streptococcal infection since September.

Scarlet fever is caused by Group A streptococcus but lots of us have it already.

Up to 20% of healthy children are already colonised by strep A in throat or skin.

This means they would get a positive+ swab results anyway.

But when you get Strep A infection it causes rash and fever.

Scarlet fever starts with general symptoms



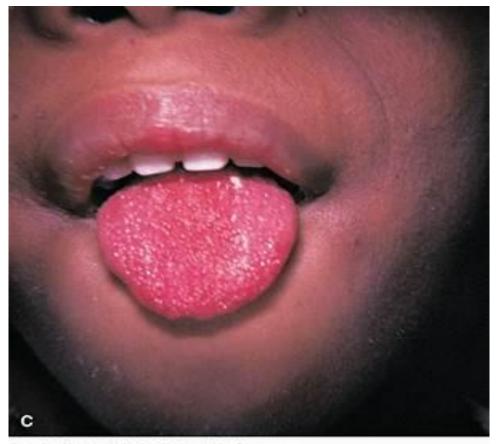
- Fever
- Nausea
- Headache
- Sore throat
- General Fatigue

The symptoms of Scarlet fever usually resolve after a week. Most children will get back to normal in around a week.

After that, they can get peeling of the fingers and toes.

You can also get White coat on the tongue which peels = strawberry tongue, Flushed face, Lymph nodes (glands) in the neck





Source: Shah BA, Lucciess M, Anedio S, Silverberg H, Adao of Andabic Energency Medican: www.accessemergencymedicane.com Colorado JJ: The M Graverbil Comeaners. Int. All ratifs inserved.

Adapted from @TessaRDavis

The rash in Scarlet fever is classically like sandpaper.

Then 48 hours later a rash appears on the tummy that spreads to the neck, arms, & legs.

The rash is:

- Rough like sandpaper
- Often worse in skin folds (groin, armpits)

arlet fever







The symptoms of Scarlet fever usually resolve after a week.

Most children will get back to normal in around a week.

After that, they can get peeling of the fingers and toes.

Know when to call 111 or see your GP.

- 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

Know when to call 999 or go to the Emergency Department



- 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

Treatment



- If your child has Scarlet fever you may get a throat swab & antibiotics.
- The fever usually settles after 24h of antibiotics but the course should be completed.
- One reason antibiotics are given is to prevent complications.
- Complications from Group A Strep are extremely rare.
- The complication that is in the news is Invasive Group A Strep (IGAS).
- Antibiotics are also given to prevent transmission.
- Not every child needs antibiotics.

Transmission



is through mucous, saliva, or coughing.

Children can pass on Group A Strep to vulnerable adults so sometimes antibiotics are recommended as a Public Health measure.

Know the exclusion period.

Children should be excluded from school until they've had 24 hours of antibiotics.

Without antibiotics, they should be excluded for 2 weeks.

There are many viruses going around that also give children a sore throat & runny nose.

It is the job of medical professionals to assess your child & make a decision.



Remember that:

- Fever is a normal bodily response to fight infection
- Fever on its own doesn't cause harm
- Most children with a fever do not have Strep A
- Most children with Scarlet fever recover quickly



- Further information is available at NHS Choices: <u>www.nhs.uk/conditions/sore-throat/</u> or <u>Scarlet fever NHS (www.nhs.uk)</u>.
- <u>UKHSA update on scarlet fever and invasive Group A strep GOV.UK</u> (www.gov.uk)
- The UK Health Security Agency (UKSA) have produced a helpful video that you can view <u>HERE</u>.
- 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 <u>HERE</u>.
- NHS North West London continuously update its website with information and support materials: <u>https://www.nwlondonics.nhs.uk/</u>
- For more advice visit: <u>UKHSA Group Strep A blog</u>.



Thank you

Any questions?

Adapted from @TessaRDavis