



Dear Parent / Guardian,

We are writing to inform you of a national increase in scarlet fever and Group A streptococcal (GAS) infections in Scotland. We know that you may find this concerning, but the NHS Tayside Health Protection Team are monitoring the situation and are working closely with Public Health Scotland to ensure all the latest information and advice is provided to the public.

What is Scarlet Fever?

Scarlet Fever is a common infection in children caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes* bacteria, also known as Group A *Streptococcus* (GAS).

What are the symptoms of Scarlet Fever?

The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

How is Scarlet Fever spread?

Scarlet fever is very infectious and can be caught by:

- breathing in bacteria in airborne droplets from an infected person's coughs and sneezes
- touching the skin of a person with a Streptococcal skin infection, such as [impetigo](#)
- sharing contaminated towels, baths, clothes or bed linen

It can also be caught from people who have the bacteria in their throat or on their skin but don't have any symptoms

What is the treatment for Scarlet Fever?

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

- See your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- Make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor
- Stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for **at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment**, to avoid spreading the infection

There is no vaccine available for Scarlet Fever.

How can I prevent Scarlet Fever from spreading?

- Good hygiene practice such as hand washing remains the most important step in preventing and controlling spread of infection. Children and adults should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and then wash their hands with soap and water after using or disposing of tissues. Do not share contaminated utensils, cups and glasses, clothes, baths, bed linen or towels.

You can find further information on Scarlet fever, visit NHS Inform at: [Scarlet fever - Illnesses & conditions | NHS inform](#)

Yours faithfully,

**Health Protection Team
Directorate of Public Health
NHS Tayside**