

Message from Professor Matt Ashton (Director of Public Health)

Scarlet fever cases remain higher than normal across the North West and nationally. The bacteria which causes scarlet fever also can cause a serious invasive infection called invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS), and there has been an increase in these infections too.

Please find attached a letter from UKHSA which sets out the signs of scarlet fever and the actions you can take to prevent spread, and respond to an outbreak.

Key messages:

- Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness but can be serious if left untreated. It can be treated easily with antibiotics. It spreads very easily through coughing and sneezing.
- The first signs are flu-like symptoms such as high temperature, sore throat and swollen neck glands. A bumpy rough feeling rash usually appears after 12 to 48 hours on the chest and tummy. If you think your child may have scarlet fever, contact your local GP or NHS111 for advice.
- If the doctor prescribes antibiotics, take the full course. Stay away from nursery, school or work for 24 hours after taking the 1st dose of antibiotics.
- To prevent spread, please encourage children to wash their hands often with soap and water, and use tissues to cover coughs and sneezes. Put used tissues quickly in the bin. Clean and cover cuts and scrapes to prevent infection invading the body.
- Keep shared surfaces like table-tops, toys, taps and handles clean.
- Whilst scarlet fever is circulating it is important that any children and adults with chickenpox do stay off school or nursery until all their blisters have dried over, which is usually 5 days after they first appeared.
- If you suspect an outbreak of scarlet fever at your school or nursery (i.e. two or more linked cases, for example in the same class or year group), please notify your health protection team on 0344 255 0562.
- If you have any cases of chickenpox or flu whilst scarlet fever is still present in the same class or year group, please notify your health protection team on 0344 255 0562.

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