

06 December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Elevated Levels of Group A Strep

You may be aware from the media that the UK is seeing a high number of Group A strep cases this year. The bacteria usually cause a mild infection which can lead to sore (strep) throats, impetigo or scarlet fever, that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, but it is very infectious. Symptoms to look out for include a 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. The NHS includes useful images. www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/

Contact NHS 111 or your 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. 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.

In very rare circumstances, these bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause serious illness – called invasive Group A strep (iGAS). This is still uncommon.

Early signs and symptoms of invasive Group A strep disease:

- Persistent High Fever
- Severe muscle aches
- Localised muscle tenderness
- Redness at the site of a wound

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

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

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

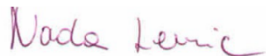
- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

How can I help my child to stay well?

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.

Major complications with Strep A are still relatively rare, but please do keep a close eye on your child if they are unwell and don't hesitate to seek help and advice if you are concerned in any way.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nada Lemic
Director of Public Health
London Borough of Bromley