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Dear Parent/Carers,

We have been notified that there are some cases of Scarlet Fever across the York area. The information below will make you aware of the signs and symptoms to look out for and provide you with information on preventing the condition.

Scarlet Fever - Signs, Symptoms & Prevention

Signs & Symptoms

In general, scarlet fever is a mild infection. Illness usually begins with a fever and sore throat. Swallowing may be painful.

Common Signs, Symptoms of Scarlet Fever

- Very red, sore throat
- Fever (101°F or higher) or chills
- Whitish coating on the tongue early in the illness
- "Strawberry" (red and bumpy) tongue
- Red skin rash that has a sandpaper feel
- Bright red skin in the creases of the underarm, elbow, and groin
- Swollen glands in the neck

Other general symptoms:

- Headache or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain

For further information visit the NHS website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

Scarlet Fever Rash

One to 2 days after the illness begins, a red rash usually appears. However, the rash can appear before illness or up to 7 days later.

The rash may first appear on the neck, underarm, and groin (the area where your stomach meets your thighs). Over time, the rash spreads over the body. The rash usually begins as small, flat blotches that slowly become fine bumps that feel like sandpaper.

Although the cheeks might look flushed (rosy), there may be a pale area around the mouth. Underarm, elbow, and groin skin creases may become brighter red than the rest of the rash.

The rash from scarlet fever fades in about 7 days. As the rash fades, the skin may peel around the fingertips, toes, and groin area. This peeling can last up to several weeks.

Prevention

People can get scarlet fever more than once. Having scarlet fever does not protect someone from getting it again in the future. While there is no vaccine to prevent scarlet fever, there are things people can do to protect themselves and others.

Good Hygiene

The best way to keep you from getting or spreading the infection is to wash your hands often. This is especially important after coughing or sneezing and before preparing foods or eating.

To prevent group A strep infections, you should:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands, if you don't have a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.

You should also wash glasses, utensils, and plates after someone who is sick uses them. These items are safe for others to use once washed.

When to seek medical advice

See your GP if you or your child:

- have scarlet fever symptoms
- do not get better in a week (after seeing a GP)
- have scarlet fever and chickenpox at the same time
- are ill again, weeks after scarlet fever got better - this can be a sign of a complication, such as rheumatic fever
- are feeling unwell and have been in contact with someone who has scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is very easily spread. Check with a GP before you go in. They may suggest a phone consultation.