

06th December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

You may be aware from the media that the UK is seeing a high number of **Group A Strep** cases this year. The bacteria (Streptococcus A) usually causes a mild infection such as a temperature and a sore throat. Occasionally it can cause more serious illness such as impetigo and scarlet fever, these more serious illnesses are treated with antibiotics.

Scarlet fever is usually relatively mild. Symptoms to look out for include a sore throat, headache, and fever, along with a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sand papery feel, a 'strawberry tongue can also develop.

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 very uncommon. For further guidance: [Group A streptococcal infections: guidance and data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/group-a-streptococcal-infections).

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

To prevent the spread of respiratory infections please remember the following advice¹

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue when possible.

¹ [Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preventing-and-controlling-infections)

- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully.
- Maintain good basic hygiene, for example washing hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Clean hard surfaces (e.g. door handles) frequently using a normal cleaning product.
- Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors

If you have any further questions, please contact us at public.health@bexley.gov.uk.

Kind regards,



Dr Nicole Klynman

Director of Public Health for Bexley