

SCARLET FEVER

Single
Point
Lesson

Scarlet fever is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pyogenes*, or group A streptococcus. The same bacteria can also cause impetigo.

Mainly a childhood disease, most common between ages 2 and 8 years. Highly infectious and spread by droplets. It takes about 2 to 5 days to develop symptoms after being infected. Seasonal rises in cases between December and April.

First symptoms - sore throat, headache, nausea and vomiting.
After 12 to 48hrs - a fine red rash appears (feels like sandpaper). Typically it first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body.
Fever over 38.3 degrees
White coating on the tongue, which peels a few days later, leaving the tongue looking red and swollen. (strawberry tongue)
Swollen glands in the neck
Feeling tired and unwell
Flushed red face, but pale around the mouth.
Peeling skin on the fingertips, toes and groin area, as the rash fades.



Treatment

10 day course of antibiotics usually Penicillin V or Amoxicillin.

Exclusion

As scarlet fever is highly contagious, children or adults diagnosed with scarlet fever are advised to stay off school or work until at least **24 hours** after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid passing on the infection.
If not treated with antibiotics, can be infectious for 2 -3 weeks.
Encourage good hand hygiene.
Do not share towels.

Potential complications include ear infection, throat abscess and pneumonia.

There is no risk to pregnant women who are in contact with children who have scarlet fever or who have symptoms themselves. However pregnant women should contact their midwife if there is any doubt of the cause of rash.



Contact the Infection control nurses on 01744 457314 /312 if an outbreak of scarlet fever is suspected or for further advice.