

24 March 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

There has been a recent increase in the number of cases of scarlet fever across Greater Manchester and some cases within Manchester too.

Scarlet fever is a highly contagious, bacterial infection that mostly affects young children (commonly between the ages of 2-8). It can spread very easily through coughing and sneezing, as well as coming into contact with an infected person. But, there are ways that we can limit how many people catch it.

This is why we are asking all parents and carers to watch for these symptoms in their child:

- The first signs of scarlet fever can be flu-like symptoms, including a high temperature, a sore throat and swollen neck glands (large lump on side of neck)
- A rash appears around 12 to 48 hours later. It looks like small, raised bumps and starts on the chest and abdominal or tummy area, then spreads. On white skin the rash looks pink or red. It may be harder to see on brown or black skin, but you can still feel it. In general, it makes skin feel rough, like sandpaper. These links, with images, will help:
<https://brownskinmatters.com/588#:~:text=A%20widespread%20rash%20often%20appears,or%20%E2%80%9Csand%20paper%E2%80%9D%20like.>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

If you notice any of these symptoms, please keep your child at home and speak to your GP to see if treatment is necessary. Please also ring your child's school or nursery to let them know as soon as possible.

Most children will go on to make a full recovery and will be able to return to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

In some rare cases scarlet fever can be dangerous causing ear infection, throat abscess, sinusitis, pneumonia, meningitis and rheumatic fever.

Other things we can all do help stop any infectious disease from spreading are:

- **Keeping good ventilation**
Open windows whenever possible as this helps to carry away the infectious droplets that may have been coughed, sneezed or breathed out.
- **Making sure you and your child are fully vaccinated**
Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves against ill health and they help to prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide each year. For more information please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/>

- **Handwashing**

Washing hands for 15-30 seconds with soap and water helps to remove viruses and bacteria and helps to stop them infecting you and others.

Thank you for all your help and support.

Yours sincerely,



David Regan
Director of Public Health for Manchester