

# Scarlet Fever

Scarlet Fever, also called scarlatina, is a very contagious infection that causes a blotchy, pink-red rash. It's most common in young children, but can affect people of any age. Rates of infection are currently increasing and it is spread in the tiny droplets found in an infected person's breath, coughs and sneezes. Once you've had it, you're unlikely to get it again. It isn't usually serious and can be treated with antibiotics from your GP.

Scarlet fever usually clears up within a week, although the skin may peel for a few weeks. The infection is contagious from before the symptoms appear, until:

- 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- up to two or three weeks later if you don't take antibiotics

## The main symptoms of scarlet fever include:

- sore throat
- headache
- high temperature (38.3C/101F or above)
- swollen glands in the neck and being sick.
- This may be followed by a rash on the body, a red face and a white or red tongue

## You can help stop yourself catching scarlet fever or spreading it to others:-

- keep your child away from nursery or school for at least 24 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
- adults should stay off work for at least 24 hours after starting treatment
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze – throw away used tissues in a bin immediately
- wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- avoid sharing utensils, cups and glasses, clothes, baths, bed linen, towels or toys

## To ease symptoms:

- rest and drink plenty of water to stay hydrated
- take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you're uncomfortable or have high temperature (*don't give aspirin to children under 16*)

## When to see your GP:

See your GP or call NHS 111 as soon as possible if:

- you think your child has scarlet fever
- you have symptoms of scarlet fever
- you or your child have been treated for scarlet fever but the symptoms have not improved after a week, or are getting worse

Treatment with antibiotics is recommended to reduce the length of time the infection is contagious, speed up recovery and reduce the risk of any further problems

For more information visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever/>

**Call NHS111 if you are concerned or need advice**