



SCARLET FEVER – Information for Parents

A suspected case of scarlet fever was diagnosed among one of the children attending your child's school. The Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit have prepared this sheet for your information, to increase awareness and to put your minds at rest.

Scarlet fever is a **throat infection** associated with a **rash** which usually affects school children between the ages of 3 and 12. It is caused by a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus pyogenes* and is **easily treatable with antibiotics**.

Symptoms can appear within 1-5 days of the child becoming infected.

These include:

- Fever;
- Red and sore throat;
- Fine red rash most commonly on the trunk, but also on the limbs, which usually appears within 2 days of having a fever or sore throat and may feel like sand paper;
- Flushing of the face with a whitish circle around the mouth;
- Swollen red tongue – strawberry tongue.

The infection causing scarlet fever is spread by saliva, by sneezing and coughing, sharing sweets, drinking cups and bottles, as well as sharing pencils which they may put in their mouth. The risk of getting scarlet fever is similar to that of getting a cold or any other ordinary throat infection, and there is no risk to pregnant women or their baby.

Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of many germs and infections – children should be encouraged to wash their hands often - before eating, after eating, after playing, after playing with their pets and after going to the toilet. Simple soap and water is enough.

Children (classmates and affected children's siblings) should attend school as usual. However, parents should not send their children to school if they are ill, and seek advice from their doctor, bringing to his attention that there was a case of Scarlet fever at school. We recommend that children diagnosed with Scarlet fever must be kept at home for 5 days after starting antibiotics, which are usually given for a duration of 10 days.

DO NOT WORRY! Should you have any questions contact your General Practitioner for advice. Further information can be obtained from the Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Unit on 23266122, 23266111 from Monday to Friday during office hours.

