

Public Health Directorate

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3RR

6 December 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Scarlet Fever Notification

We are writing to inform you of a recent increase in scarlet fever to raise awareness, and to remind you of the symptoms and the actions to be taken if your child shows signs of the infection. Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection caused by Group A Streptococcus or 'strep' (GAS). It is usually a mild illness, but can cause complications, and it is highly infectious. Therefore, it is important to look out for the early symptoms in your child, which include:

- a sore throat
- headache
- nausea and vomiting
- fever of 38°C or more
- after 12 to 48 hours a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel develops. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel
- a white coating on the tongue which then peels, leaving the tongue red, swollen and covered in little bumps (strawberry tongue)
- the face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

1. Contact your GP as soon as possible - It's important that children get antibiotics if they have scarlet fever because it helps them get better more quickly and prevents severe illness and complications.
2. Stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for **at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment**, to avoid spreading the infection.
3. Make sure that your child takes the full course of any prescribed antibiotics

Severe illness & complications

Children who have had chickenpox or influenza recently are more likely to develop more serious infection during an outbreak of scarlet fever and so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as increasing unwellness, a persistent high fever, cough and difficulty breathing cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned, please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child (aged 2 to school year 11) has not received a flu vaccine yet, please contact your GP to book an appointment for a free flu vaccination.

For more information, please see this guidance from the UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scarlet-fever-symptoms-diagnosis-treatment>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Bradley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof Peter Bradley
Director of Public Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ivan Muscat', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Ivan Muscat MBE
Consultant Microbiologist/Communicable
Disease