



People Directorate

Public Health Department

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Across greater Manchester we have seen a recent increase in the number of cases of Scarlet fever. Scarlet fever is a highly contagious, bacterial infection that is commonly seen in children between the ages of 2 and 8. It is spread by aerosol-coughing, sneezing, and breathing out as well as coming into direct contact with an infected person.

Please be vigilant for these symptoms in your child

- The first signs of scarlet fever can be flu-like symptoms, including a high temperature, a sore throat and swollen neck glands (a large lump on the side of your neck).
- A rash appears 12 to 48 hours later. It looks like small, raised bumps and starts on the chest and tummy, then spreads. The rash makes your skin feel rough, like sandpaper.

If you notice any of these symptoms, please keep your child at home and speak to your GP to see if treatment is necessary. The vast majority of children will go on to make a full recovery and will 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.

Over the past 2 years everyone has been following COVID precautions, which has helped prevent the spread of many other infections. As people are starting to mix more freely, there is a likelihood that we may see an increase in other childhood illnesses over the coming months, such as Scarlet fever and chicken pox. Chicken pox is generally more prevalent in the spring months. Stay vigilant for symptoms, more information on childhood illness can be found on [Health A to Z - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk). Contact your GP if you have any concerns.

Some simple steps that we can all take to help reduce the onward transmission of any infectious disease, are;

- **Maintain good ventilation**

Ventilation is the process of bringing fresh, outdoor air inside and letting indoor air outside in order to maintain or improve air quality.

Open windows or doors whenever possible, this helps to carry away the infectious droplets that may have been coughed, sneezed or breathed out. If the temperature outside is extremely hot or cold, you can open windows for a few minutes every hour to bring in fresh air.

- **Making sure your child is fully vaccinated**

Vaccination is the most important thing we can do to protect ourselves and our children against ill health. They prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide every year.

Vaccines protect you and your child from many serious and potentially deadly diseases. Protect other people in your community – by helping to stop diseases spreading to people who cannot have vaccines. For further information please visit [Vaccinations - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk).

- **Frequent and effective handwashing**

Washing your hands for 15-30 seconds with soap and water, helps remove dirt, viruses and bacteria, to stop them infecting you and also preventing you from spreading illnesses to others.

You should wash your hands:

- after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- before and after handling raw foods like meat and vegetables
- before eating or handling food
- after blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing
- before and after treating a cut or wound
- after touching animals, including pets, their food and after cleaning their cages

Yours sincerely,



Gillian McLauchlan
Deputy Director of Public Health