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Dear Parent / Guardian,

Due to the increase in cases of scarlet fever caused by Strep A in the UK, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the signs, symptoms and the actions to be taken if you, your child or anyone in your household should develop symptoms.

Public Health has advised the following:

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.

The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

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

- contact your GP and stay at home
- make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor
- stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for **at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment**, to avoid spreading the infection.

If you are living in the same household as someone with scarlet fever, you should contact your GP as soon as you develop symptoms in order to start the antibiotic treatment as soon as possible.

Complications

Children who have had **chickenpox** 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 a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

You can find more information in the guidance [Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment](#), and further advice can also be obtained from the Health Protection Team on 642 639 during office hours.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Clare Walker, Head of Health Protection