

Dear parents and carers,

You will have seen in the news reports of increased cases of Strep A and Scarlet Fever also reports of some children developing invasive group A streptococcal infection (iGAS). The following descriptions may help:

- Group A streptococcal (GAS) infection is a group of bacteria which causes infections in the throat and skin.
- Scarlet fever is a contagious infection caused by Group A streptococcal infection that mostly affects young children. It is easily treated with antibiotics.
- Sometimes severe GAS disease may occur when bacteria get into parts of the body where bacteria are usually not found, such as the blood, muscles, or the lungs. These infections are known as invasive Group A Streptococcal disease (iGAS) and may include serious conditions, such as toxic shock syndrome. Although iGAS is a worrying condition, the majority of these children will recover with proper treatment.

While we understand that parents are likely to be worried by reports they are seeing in the media related to iGAS, however, Public Health Wales state "Cases of invasive group A streptococcal infection (iGAS) remain rare in Wales, and children have a very low risk of contracting the disease".

Cold and flu like symptoms are very common at this time of year, especially in children. Most children with these symptoms will have a common seasonal virus, which can be treated by keeping the child hydrated, and with paracetamol.

Some children with cold and flu like symptoms - sore throat, headache, fever - may be experiencing some of the early symptoms of Scarlet Fever, which also circulates at this time of year. These children may go on to develop scarlet fever specific symptoms, including a fine pink-red rash that feels like sandpaper to touch, and parents should contact their GP if they see these symptoms.

While scarlet fever is more concerning than a common cold, it is still usually a mild illness from which most children will recover without complications, especially if the condition is properly treated with antibiotics.

If your child is experiencing any of the above symptoms of Scarlet Fever, please keep your child at home, away from nursery, school or work and follow any guidance provided by their GP on how long they should remain absent from these settings.

The best thing that you as parents can do is to provide the care you would usually provide for a child with cold and flu like symptoms and to familiarise yourself with the symptoms of scarlet fever and iGAS on the Public Health Wales or NHS 111 websites as a precaution.

Public Health Wales <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/strep-a-scarlet-fever-and-igas/>

NHS Wales <https://abbhealthiertogether.cymru.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/scarlet-fever>

Please remind your child to carry tissues and use them to catch coughs or sneezes. You may also take this opportunity to reinforce the principles of 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it'; which refers to the three steps that should be taken to deal safely with a sneeze and reduce the spread of germs. Lastly, and most importantly to remind your child about regular hand washing to help to prevent the spread of infection.

Be assured that Caerphilly County Borough Council is working closely with Public Health Wales and with schools, early years and childcare providers to ensure that all our children continue to be able to learn and develop in safe and healthy environments."

Regards

Keri Cole

Chief Education Officer

## Understanding the symptoms of iGAS and Scarlet Fever



### Treat at home

If your child has any of the following:

- Sore throat
- Headache

Cold and flu like symptoms are very common at this time of year, especially in children.



[Read more](#)

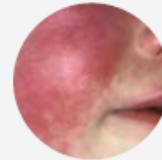
Most will have a common seasonal virus, which can be treated at home by keeping the child hydrated, and with paracetamol.



### Contact NHS 111 Wales

If your child also develops any of the following:

- Fever
- Nausea or vomiting
- A fine red rash, which typically first appears on the chest and stomach. Older children may not have the rash.



Contact NHS 111 Wales or your GP for advice.



### Contact GP straight away

If your child has any of the following:

- Fever (a high temperature above 38°C)
- Severe muscle aches
- Localised muscle tenderness
- Redness at the site of a wound

Contact your GP or get medical advice straight away.



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
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