



If you require more information about Scarlet Fever

Please contact:

The Community Infection Prevention & Control Nurse

Or

The local Health Protection Unit

Or

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/topics>

Information produced by collaboration between:

The Health Protection Agency North West,
North West Infection Prevention & Control Nurses

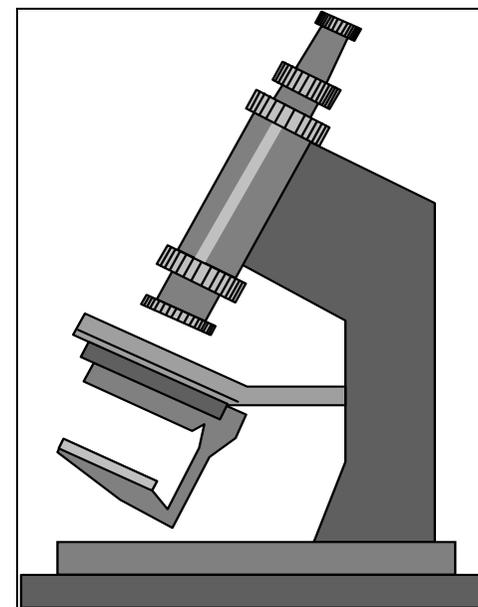
And

North West Environmental Health Officers.

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HPA North West



Scarlet Fever

INFORMATION LEAFLET

What is Scarlet Fever?

It is a bacterial infection. It may also be referred to as 'Scarletina' or 'Strep Throat'.

It usually affects the back of the mouth & throat and causes a skin rash.

It tends to be most common in the late winter and spring.

How is Scarlet Fever spread?

Scarlet Fever is usually spread by:

- The secretions from the nose and throat of an infected person – when they cough or sneeze.
- Objects contaminated by the secretions of an infected person e.g. Hankies, clothes, toys – though this method of spread is less common.
- It can be spread by contaminated foodstuffs, particularly raw milk and milk products but this is **not** common.

What is the incubation period of Scarlet Fever?

- The incubation period (the period when someone has the infection but is not displaying symptoms) is usually 2-5 days, although it may be as short as 1 day and as long as 7 days.

What are the symptoms of Scarlet Fever?

- The symptoms vary a great deal but usually start with a sore throat and swelling of the glands in the neck.
- The tonsils may be covered by a patchy white discharge.

- The bright red rash (from which the infection takes its name) appears on the 2nd day and can be mild or widely spread.
- The rash is usually fine and red, will 'blanch' (fade) under pressure, and is commonly marked with points or punctures that feel like sandpaper to touch.
- The rash mainly occurs on the neck, chest, in the folds of the underarm, elbows, groin, and on the inner thighs.
- Typically, the rash does not involve the face, but there may be 'flushing' of the cheeks and paleness around the mouth and a strawberry coloured tongue.
- A high temperature (fever), feeling sick and vomiting sometimes occur in severe infections.
- During recovery, the skin can peel, particularly from the fingers and toes.

What is the treatment for Scarlet Fever?

- If treated promptly with antibiotics, the condition will quickly become non - infectious. However, untreated patients can be infectious for 2 – 3 weeks.
- With treatment, the infection rarely causes any serious complications.

How long should I stay off work, school or nursery?

- It is recommended that someone with Scarlet Fever should stay off work, school or nursery for **at least 24 hours after starting their antibiotic treatment.**

Note to medical staff

- Scarlet Fever is a notifiable disease.