



Group A Strep and scarlet fever: What look out for, what to do and where to find more information

Group A strep (GAS) are common bacteria which cause a range of infections, including scarlet fever. These infections are usually mild. GAS is spread by close contact with someone who's infected and can be passed to others through coughs and sneezes, or from a wound. Invasive group A strep (iGAS) is a rare infection when the bacteria get into parts of the body like the lungs or bloodstream, where they can cause more serious disease.

We are seeing higher than expected levels of scarlet fever at the moment. The early symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting followed by a red, pinhead rash giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture.

If you're concerned, here's what to do:

For information and advice, please see [the NHS Scarlet Fever webpage](#)

To help reduce infections, follow good hand and respiratory hygiene, including:

- Washing hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap
- Catching coughs and sneezes using tissues – catch it, bin it, kill it
- Keeping away from others when you feel unwell.

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- Your child is getting worse
- Your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- Your child has a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other [signs of dehydration](#)
- Your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38oC, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39oC or higher

- Your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- Your child is very tired or irritable.

You should call 999 or go to A&E if:

- Your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- There are pauses when your child breathes
- Your child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- Your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

[Find out more on the UKHSA Blog](#)

Are you expecting a little one?

Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect you and your baby from dangerous viruses such as flu, Covid-19 and whooping cough.

All pregnant women are eligible for these vaccines, they don't contain a live virus, so they are safe to have during pregnancy.

To book your Covid booster vaccine, visit www.nhs.uk or call 119.

To book your flu and whooping cough vaccines, contact your doctor or ask your midwife. Flu vaccines are also available at your local pharmacy.



[Find out more about vaccinations in pregnancy](#)

Order your repeat prescriptions before Christmas

By re-stocking medicine cabinets, knowing when your GP practice is open and planning ahead for repeat prescriptions, you can ensure you have everything you need ahead of the Christmas bank holiday weekend.

You can order your medication using the NHS App, or through your GP practice, which may also have an online service



Community groups can apply for new cost of living grants from today

Voluntary organisations and community groups helping local residents can now apply for two new Local Community Fund (LCF) cost of living grants. The first grant available is for groups helping those who are struggling to buy nutritious food to help improve health and well-being. The second is aimed at groups who need a contribution towards their own rising energy bills



Groups can now apply for up to £5,000 from both grant funds before Sunday 29 January 2023.

Watch out for further news on yet more funding pots which will be made available to groups.

[Find out more and apply](#)

Ways to cut energy bills

We've invested £150,000 in a Nottingham Energy Partnership scheme to help improve the energy efficiency of combi boilers in homes

This aims to save households an estimated £178 to £267 a year in bills and is part of our wider package of cost-of-living support.

Advice and support is aimed at those on low-incomes or at risk of serious health conditions



[Find out more about optimising your heating](#)

Brrr... it's cold outside

With temperatures falling, it's important to try and keep warm and stay well during the cold weather. If it's difficult to heat the whole house, there are things we can consider doing to keep ourselves warm like wearing layers, moving around and staying active and having of hot drinks.



[Find out more ways to keep well and stay warm](#)

Sleigh no to loan sharks this Christmas

Christmas is a time to celebrate with family and friends but there are some unwelcome guests who follow the festive season - predatory loan sharks. Borrowing from loan sharks can quickly lead to a spiral of debt that's difficult to break free from.



Our friends at Stop Loan Sharks have put together some advice on their website to help you spot a loan shark and protect your loved ones from falling into their clutches.

If you are worried about a friend or family member who is being taken advantage of by a loan shark you can Contact the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on 0300 555 2222 for support. They can provide advice and support if you, or someone you know, has been affected by illegal money lending.

[Read advice from Stop Loan Sharks](#)

Wishing all our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year

A purple banner with white and yellow text. In the top left corner is the HM Government logo. In the top right corner is the NHS logo. The main text reads "BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER" in large white letters, with "BOOST" in yellow. Below that, "FLU + COVID-19 BOOSTER VACCINES" is written in yellow. At the bottom, it says "Find out how to book at nhs.uk/wintervaccinations".