

6 December 2022

Dear Parent / Carer / Guardian,

You may have seen reports in the national news of a small number of child deaths from invasive Group A Strep infection (iGAS). I am writing to provide you with information on this infection and to provide advice on keeping your children safe.

The Strep A bacteria causes a number of common childhood illnesses. These include scarlet fever, sore throats and skin infections such as impetigo.

A number of schools and nurseries in Brent have cases of scarlet fever at the moment. Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness but it is very infectious. Therefore, look out for symptoms in your child. These include a sore throat, headache, and fever, along with a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important. If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement. Possible warning signs include:


- your child is getting worse
 - your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
 - your child has had 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 38°C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39°C 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
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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

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many germs. By teaching your child how to wash their hands properly with soap for 20 seconds, using a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes, and keeping away from others when feeling unwell, they will be able to reduce the risk of picking up or spreading infections.

Yours faithfully



Dr Melanie Smith
Director of Public Health