



## Scarlet fever: A guide for parents

Dear Parent,

When an incidence of scarlet fever is reported, the school and parents take appropriate precautions immediately. Below are some guidelines and precautionary steps for you to consider for your child as well.

The Healthspring team has put together useful information, including common questions that you may have and also some easy steps for you to take, to protect your child.

Please go through this letter and call us, or write to us, in case there are any further questions or if you require further information. You can call 6130-3535 and ask to speak to me or any of the other physicians, or reach Shivani Dawlatjada at [shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in](mailto:shivani.dawlatjada@healthspring.in).

### What is scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever is an infectious disease caused by Group A Streptococcus pyogenes bacteria which presents as sore throat, fever and a characteristic red rash. It is commonly seen in children aged 5 to 15 years.

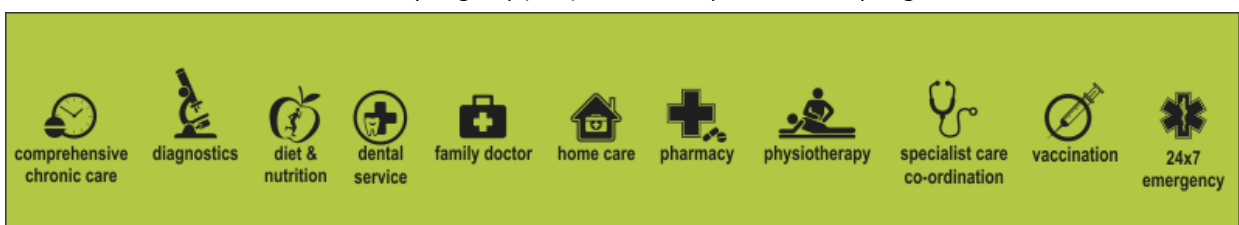
### What is the contagious period for scarlet fever?

As stated previously, the contagious period for scarlet fever occurs during both the initial subclinical (before development of symptoms) phase, about 12 hours to seven days after initial contact with the bacteria, and during the acute phase when the person has the rash and fever.

### How do children typically contract scarlet fever?

Group A strep bacteria can live in a person's nose and throat. The bacteria are spread through contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze. If you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes after touching something that has these droplets on it, you may become ill. If you drink from the same glass or eat from the same plate as the sick person, you could also become ill. It is possible to get scarlet fever from contact with sores from group A strep skin infections.

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## How do you know if your child is infected?

### Common Symptoms of Scarlet Fever

- A very red, sore throat
- A fever (101° F or above)
- A red rash with a sandpaper feel
- Bright red skin in underarm, elbow, and groin creases
- A whitish coating on the tongue or back of the throat
- A "strawberry" tongue
- Headache or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- Swollen glands

### Complications:

In most cases, the rash and other symptoms of scarlet fever will be gone in about two weeks. However, when it's left untreated, scarlet fever can cause serious complications.

### These can include:

- [rheumatic fever](#)
- kidney disease
- ear infections
- skin infections
- throat abscesses
- [pneumonia](#)
- Arthritis

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### What should you do if your child contracts a scarlet fever?

- Avoid contact with the infected child.
- Ensure that the child stays hydrated, has nutritious meals and gets proper rest.
- Calamine lotion for skin itching.
- Watch for development of early complications such as skin infection, pneumonia, and sepsis, and late complications such as rheumatic fever and kidney disease.
- The treatment for scarlet fever is a 10 day course of antibiotics. The infection itself is usually cured with a 10-day course of antibiotics, but it may take a few weeks for the tonsils and swollen glands to return to normal.

### When is your child ready to go back to school?

When scarlet fever occurs because of a throat infection, the fever typically subsides within 3 to 5 days, and the sore throat passes soon afterward. The rash usually fades on the sixth day after sore throat symptoms started, and begins to peel (as described above). The infection itself is usually cured with a 10-day course of antibiotics, but it may take a few weeks for tonsils and swollen glands to return to normal.

### How can you protect your child from contracting scarlet fever?

The best way to keep from getting infected is to wash your hands often and avoid sharing eating utensils, linens, towels or other personal items. It is especially important for anyone with a sore throat to wash his or her hands often. **There is no vaccine to prevent strep throat or scarlet fever.** Children with scarlet fever or strep throat should stay home from school or daycare for at least 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

We hope this answers your questions; please be assured that Oberoi International School and Healthspring are vigilant, and will help keep your child healthy. Please do feel free to reach out to us if you have any more questions.

Dr. Khullar  
Paediatrician, Healthspring

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