

SCARLET FEVER FACT SHEET

What is scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever occurs mainly in children between the ages of 5 and 18 who are infected with group A streptococci bacteria. Scarlet fever can occur at any time of the year but is more common in the colder seasons. Once a person has scarlet fever, they usually **do not** get it again.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:

- Very red, sore throat
- Fever or chills
- “Strawberry” tongue (red and bumpy)
- Red skin rash that feels like sandpaper
- Bright red skin in creases of underarm, elbow, and groin
- Swollen glands
- Headache or body aches
- Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain

How can it be prevented?

- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw it away. Wash your hands.
- Sneeze or cough into your upper sleeve or elbow, if no tissue is available.
- Wash your children’s hands after they cough or sneeze.
- Wash dishes after a sick person uses them.

How is it spread?

- By breathing in droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person, or by touching something with droplets on it and then touching your mouth or nose
- By drinking from the same glass or eating from the same plate as an infected person

People are **most contagious** 1-2 days before the rash appears and 4–5 days after.

When treated with proper medicine, people are no longer contagious after 24 hours.

How is it treated?

- See your doctor for diagnosis.
- Take antibiotics as prescribed, **even if you start feeling better.**
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.

What are some serious complications with scarlet fever?

- Rheumatic fever (affects the joints and heart)
- Acute kidney disease

Look out for these symptoms that may lead to those conditions:

- High fever
- Blood in urine
- Inflamed glands of the neck
- Earache
- Skin infection

Most cases of scarlet fever are mild, but still need to be treated.

More Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/groupastrep/diseases-public/scarlet-fever.html>

This FACT SHEET is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a healthcare provider. For more information call your healthcare provider.

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