

# Suspected Group A Strep infection

## Information for parents and carers

This sheet provides information for parents and carers who have brought their child to King's College Hospital Paediatric Emergency Department with suspected Group A Strep infection. If you have any other questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak to the team caring for your child.

Your child has been assessed and is safe to take home. While it is likely their illness is caused by a virus and will settle on its own, there are some signs to suggest it may be caused by a type of bacterial infection called Group A Strep. It is important to know that, in most cases, this infection is mild and improves quickly.

We don't know for sure if your child has the infection, but we are treating them with antibiotics. There is currently more Group A Strep around than normal and this is felt to be the best way to stop the spread.

Your child may be diagnosed with scarlet fever, which is a type of Group A Strep infection that causes a rash usually with a sore throat. Within about 24 hours after starting on antibiotics, your child probably won't have a fever and won't be contagious. By the second or third day, other symptoms should start to go away.

### Does my child need a swab test?

Most children who we treat with penicillin will not be given a bacterial throat swab test. This is because the effect of penicillin is so predictable. If your child needs a different type of antibiotic, we will take a throat swab. This is to doublecheck the antibiotics are effective. **We will not always need to contact you with the results.** We will prioritise contacting positive cases and where there is a concern of bacterial resistance. If you do not hear from us, it is good news but please finish the course of antibiotics you are given.

Please make sure we have your contact details. If we do need to contact you, we will do so in 24 to 48 hours, when the results become available.

### How do I stop the spread to other people?

To prevent spreading the infection to others in your home:

- make sure your child doesn't share food, drinks, towels, kitchen utensils with other family members
- teach your child to cover all sneezes or coughs – if a tissue isn't handy, children should sneeze or cough into their elbow, not their hands
- remind everyone in the family to wash their hands well and often.

## How can I help my child feel better?

Home care can help your child feel better while they fight off the infection. Give them plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration, such as water or milk, especially if your child had a fever. Avoid orange juice or other acidic drinks, which can irritate a sore throat. For fever and pain, your doctor may suggest an over-the-counter medicine, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Follow the package directions on how much to give and when.

## When can my child go back to school?

Group A Strep infection is contagious, but most children can go back to school when they've taken antibiotics for at least 24 hours and no longer have a fever.

Scan the QR Codes below using your phone's camera.



### YouTube Video:

Parent and carer advice on Group A Strep and Scarlet Fever



### UK Health Security Agency blog:

Group A Strep. What you need to know.



### Specialist Pharmacy Service:

Advice on getting kids to take tablets

## When should I seek medical help again for my child?

In most cases, your child will recover long before they finish their course of antibiotics.

If your child becomes more unwell after 24 hours that is uncommon. Come back to the Emergency Department if your child:

- has new or continued fever and looks more unwell to you.
- starts drooling, cannot talk, or their voice becomes muffled
- can't drink or shows signs of being dried out (dehydration), for example, they have a dry mouth, sunken eyes, make less urine and/or their urine is very dark
- is hard to wake up (lethargic), acts confused or does not know what they're doing

## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleton Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: 020 3299 3601

Email: [kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net)**