

8th December 2022

## Advice for parents and carers

### Group A strep in children

There are lots of viruses that cause sore throats, coughs and colds to circulate, especially over winter. These usually get better without needing any special medical treatment or medicine. However, children can occasionally develop a bacterial infection on top of a virus and that can make them more unwell.

One of these bacteria is called Group A Strep (GAS), it's very common, is not new and can be treated, responding well to antibiotics. It has been in the news over the last few days as it has been found in some children who have become very sick, very quickly. Fortunately, this is still very rare.

Most children recover well after a mild illness. Your child may be poorly for a few days but will usually recover well. Antibiotics may help them recover quicker, but they are not always needed. There is more GAS around this winter than in recent years, causing a lot of children to be unwell. We think this is because there is much more mixing now and these bugs are new to many young children, so they are more likely to catch and spread them.

Signs that suggest your child might have Strep throat are:

- Fever within the last 24 hours
- White spots at the back of their throat (pus on their tonsils)
- Very large or red tonsils
- Sore (tender) lumps under their chin
- If they have become poorly quickly over the past couple of days
- No cough or runny nose

**If you are concerned that your child might have these contact 111 or GP Surgery. You can also find more information [here](#).**

Antibiotics are not routinely recommended as a preventative treatment and should only be taken when recommended by your doctor.

If there are cases identified in a child's class, any child showing symptoms should be assessed by their GP and will be prescribed antibiotics if needed. Children are not infectious after 24 hours on treatment and can return to school once they're feeling well enough after this period.

Good hand and respiratory hygiene are also important for stopping the spread of many bugs. 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.

Keep unwell children off school or nursery and away from vulnerable adults and children.

We know that when there are lots of viruses circulating, like flu. Reducing these viruses through vaccination can help protect against GAS outbreaks and is the best way to make sure they are protected from serious illnesses.