

Advice from the NHS Forth Valley Public Health Department

Streptococcal Infection

General information for Parents

What is it?

During the winter months viruses and bacteria that cause sore throats and other respiratory infections can be quite common. The bacteria called Group A Streptococcus is probably the second most common cause of sore throat. However it can cause other things including Scarlet Fever. Viruses are the most common cause of a sore throat.

Symptoms

Streptococcal Sore Throat

Symptoms are usually a sore throat, fever, tonsillitis and swollen lymph glands in the neck.

Scarlet Fever

In addition to the above symptoms, there is a characteristic rash on the body, accompanied by facial flushing and a smooth, red "strawberry" tongue.

Spread

The organism spreads from person to person by coughs and sneezes.

Prevention

People with streptococcal infection can pass it on to others for 10-21 days if they are not treated. A child with a persistent or particularly bad sore throat accompanied with a fever should be taken to their GP. If they are given antibiotics, they are no longer infectious after 48 hours. Good hand hygiene is very important; pupils should be advised to wash their hands regularly. They should also be asked to catch their sneeze and coughs in a tissue which should be put into the bin.

Exclusion Period

Pupils should be excluded from classes until clinically recovered or 48 hours after they have started antibiotic treatment, whichever is the longer.

Those suspected to have a viral sore throat, and contacts of cases do not need to be excluded.