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Dear parent/carer,

As this is the first winter without pandemic restrictions in two years, you and your children may be more susceptible to the usual winter bugs and viruses this year. Winter bugs and viruses are usually mild, but can sometimes become more serious. More information about when to keep your child away from school and nursery is available here: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

You may have seen the news recently about the **Group A strep** bacteria. This is a common bacteria found in the throat that can cause a range of illnesses, including tonsillitis, scarlet fever and some skin infections.

Scarlet fever

[Scarlet fever](#) is usually a mild illness, but it is highly infectious.

Look out for symptoms in your child, which include a sore throat, headache, and fever, along with a fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel. On darker skin, the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment of scarlet fever with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia or a bloodstream infection.

If your child has scarlet fever, keep them at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others

When to seek help

As a parent, if you feel that your child seems seriously unwell, you should trust your own judgement.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

- Your child is getting worse
- Your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- Your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other signs of [dehydration](#)
- Your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38°C, or is older than 3 months and has a temperature of 39 °C or higher
- Your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
- Your child is very tired or irritable

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

Kind regards,



Anna Bryden

Director of Public Health