

Scarlet Fever

FACTSHEET

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What is Scarlet Fever?

Scarlet Fever is a disease caused by bacteria called Group A Streptococcus, the same bacteria that causes strep throat. Scarlet Fever is a rash that sometimes occurs in people that have strep throat.

Who gets Scarlet Fever?

The rash of Scarlet Fever is usually seen in children under the age of eighteen.

What are the symptoms of Scarlet Fever?

The most common symptoms of Scarlet Fever are:

- A rash that can first be seen on the chest and abdomen. The rash may then spread all over the body. It is usually redder in the armpits and groin area. The rash usually lasts 2-5 days. After the rash is gone, the skin on the tips of the toes and fingers can begin to peel.
- There is no rash present on the face, but the face is reddened (flushed).
- The throat is very red and sore. It can have white or yellow patches.
- The tongue looks like a strawberry because the normal bumps on the tongue look bigger. The tongue can have a whitish coating on it.
- Fever of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher is common.

Other less common symptoms are nausea, vomiting, and body aches.

How is Scarlet Fever spread?

Scarlet Fever is spread from one person to another. This happens when you come into contact with the sick person because the germ is carried in the mouth and nasal fluids. If you touch your mouth, nose or eyes after touching something that has these fluids on them, you may become ill. Also, if you drink

from the same glass or eat from the same plate as the sick person, you also could become ill.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear 1-3 days after infection.

Is a person with Scarlet Fever contagious?

A person with Scarlet Fever is contagious until he/she has been on an appropriate antibiotic for at least 24 hours.

How is Scarlet Fever treated?

Scarlet Fever can be treated with a variety of antibiotics. It is extremely important that the antibiotic is taken exactly as you are told and that all of the antibiotic is finished. The medicine should never be shared with other family members or friends.

Should a person with Scarlet Fever be excluded from work or school?

People are contagious from the time the sore throat starts until they have been on the appropriate antibiotic for at least 24 hours. They may return to work or school after that time once they are feeling well. Medical clearance may be required to return to school or work

Want more information?

Information about Scarlet Fever and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call (202) 442-9371.

