

## **Scarlet fever symptoms**

The symptoms of scarlet fever are non-specific in early illness and may include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. After 12 to 48 hours the characteristic red, generalised pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture.

On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, although the sandpaper feel should be present.

Patients typically have flushed cheeks and paleness around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a 'strawberry tongue'. During convalescence peeling of the skin may occur at the tips of fingers and toes and less often over wide areas of the trunk and limbs.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, some patients may require hospital admission to manage symptoms or complications. There is a risk of long-term complications such as kidney disease and rheumatic fever.

**Prompt treatment with appropriate antibiotics significantly reduces the risk of complications.**

We would ask schools and early years providers to make parents aware of the rise in notifications of scarlet fever and ask that they contact their GP if they spot symptoms of scarlet fever or have concerns.

Further information about scarlet fever is available on the PHA website: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/scarlet-fever> and also on nidirect: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/scarlet-fever>

## Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

- Sore throats, a white coating can appear on the tongue



- Fever
- Skin infections
- A rash – sometimes feels like sandpaper, rashes can be harder to see on black or brown skin, but you can still feel it

