

What is

Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS) FAQs

We are aware of rising concern around Group A Strep (GAS), Scarlet Fever and Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS). There are currently lots of viruses circulating that can cause sore throats, colds and coughs. These should resolve without medical intervention. However, children can occasionally develop a bacterial infection on top of a virus and that can make them more unwell.

Please read the below FAQs for clarification on the different cases and what they mean for your child.

What is Group A Strep (GAS)?

Group A Strep, often known as GAS or Strep A, is a common bacteria which causes a range of infections, some mild and a few more serious. These including scarlet fever, tonsillitis, and impetigo and are not Invasive Group A Strep.

What is Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)?

Invasive Group A Strep (known as iGAS) causes more serious infections. This occurs when Group A Strep bacteria gets into parts of the body where it is not normally found, like the lungs or bloodstream. While iGAS infections are still uncommon, there has been an increase in cases this year, particularly in children.

What is scarlet fever?

Scarlet fever is a mild illness although highly contagious that mostly affects young children. It's easily treated with antibiotics. The first signs of scarlet fever can be a sore throat, headache, fever and a fine pinkish or red rash on the body that feels like sandpaper. The rash can be difficult to see on darker skin but it will still have the sandpapery feel.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if you suspect your child has scarlet fever, because early treatment with antibiotics is important to reduce the risk of complications. 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. Scarlet fever lasts for around 1 week.



Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS) FAQs

How can I prevent Group A Strep (GAS) infections?

- GAS is spread by close contact with an infected person and can be passed on through coughs and sneezes.
- Good hand and respiratory hygiene are important for stopping the spread of many infections. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds and use a tissue to catch coughs and sneezes.



Do I need to seek medical attention for Group A Strep (GAS) infections?

Group A Strep (GAS) infections are usually mild, however in some cases you may need to seek medical attention for:

- [Tonsillitis](#)
- [Sore throat](#)
- [Scarlet Fever](#)
- [Impetigo](#)



How do I know if my child has Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)?

Some current cases are presenting with sepsis-like symptoms such as:

- Blue, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue
- Rash that doesn't fade when you roll a glass over it
- Difficulty breathing or a weak, high-pitched cry – not like their normal cry
- Not responding like normal, e.g. Not interested in feeding, eating much less than normal
- Being sleepier than normal or difficult to wake



Where can I get help for Invasive Group A Strep (iGAS)?

Trust your judgement when your child is poorly. Speak to your GP or call **111** if your child's symptoms are worsening.

Always call **999** or go to A&E if your child:

- Is having difficulty breathing – grunting noises, or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- Is pausing when breathing
- Has blue skin, tongue or lips
- Is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

