**Scarlet Fever:**

**Scarlet fever, also called scarlatina, is an infection that causes a blotchy, pink-red rash. It's most common in young children, but can affect people of any age.**

It isn't usually serious and can be treated with antibiotics from your GP. Once you've had it, you're unlikely to get it again.

**Symptoms of scarlet fever**

Symptoms of scarlet fever develop within a week of being infected.

Early signs include a [sore throat](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Sore-throat/Pages/Introduction.aspx), a [headache](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Headache/Pages/Introduction.aspx), a high temperature (38.3C/101F or above), [swollen glands](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/swollen-glands/Pages/Introduction.aspx) in the neck and being sick.

This may be followed by a rash on the body, a red face and a white or red tongue:

The scarlet fever rash:

* usually starts on the chest or tummy, before spreading to other areas
* is made up of pink-red blotches that may join up
* feels like sandpaper (this may be the most obvious sign in someone with dark skin)
* may be brightest red in body folds, such as the armpits or elbows
* turns white if you press a glass on it

Sometimes a white coating may form on the tongue.

This peels away after a few days, leaving the tongue red and swollen.

This is known as a "strawberry tongue".

**When to see your GP**

See your GP or call [NHS 111](https://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/AboutNHSservices/Emergencyandurgentcareservices/Pages/NHS-111.aspx) as soon as possible if:

* you think your child has scarlet fever
* you have symptoms of scarlet fever
* you or your child have been treated for scarlet fever but the symptoms haven't improved after a week or are getting worse

Treatment with antibiotics is recommended to reduce the length of time the infection is contagious, speed up recovery and reduce the risk of any further problems.

Your GP can usually diagnose scarlet fever by looking at the rash. Sometimes they may use a cotton bud to remove a bit of saliva from the throat so it can be tested.

**Treatment for scarlet fever**

Your GP will prescribe [antibiotic tablets](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Antibiotics-penicillins/Pages/Introduction.aspx) (or liquid for young children) to take for five or ten days.

You or your child should start feeling better after a day or two, but make sure you finish the whole course of treatment.