

Dear Parent/Guardian

Scarlet fever and chickenpox

We have been informed that there have been cases of both chickenpox and scarlet fever at the setting.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others.

Scarlet Fever

The **symptoms** of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

- See your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- Make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor.

Stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection.

Chicken Pox

Chickenpox is usually a mild and common childhood illness that most children catch at some point. It causes a rash of red, itchy spots that turn into fluid-filled blisters that crust over to form scabs. To prevent spreading the infection, children with chicken pox should stay away from the nursery, school or playgroups for at least 5 days from onset of the rash AND until all the spots have crusted over. Ibuprofen (Brufen, Nurofen, Calprofen) should NOT be given to children who have Chickenpox.

Some people are at higher risk from chicken pox and should contact a health professional who will assess if preventative treatment is needed:

- If you/your child is **immunosuppressed** and you are certain that you/they have been in contact with chickenpox, please contact NHS 111 or your GP as soon as possible.
- If you are **pregnant**, have not had chickenpox in the past, and are certain you have been in contact with chickenpox, please contact NHS 111, your GP or your midwife as soon as possible.
- If you are caring for a **newborn baby** and you are certain they have had contact with chickenpox please also contact your midwife, NHS 111 or your GP as soon as possible.

Complications

Children who have **chickenpox** or **influenza** at the same time as **scarlet fever** are more likely to develop more serious infection so parents should remain vigilant for symptoms such as a persistent high fever, cellulitis (skin infection) and arthritis (joint pain and swelling). If you are concerned for any reason, please seek medical assistance immediately.

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

If you have any questions please either contact your GP or ring the Health Protection Team on: 0344 225 3560.

Yours faithfully

Health Protection Team

UK Health Security Agency West Midlands