

My child has been ill - when should they come back to school

This information is from the [NHS Choices website - 'Is my child too ill for school?'](#). Please visit the NHS site for more information.

Not every illness needs to keep your child from school. If you keep your child away from school, be sure to inform the school on the first day of their absence. Whether you send your child to school will depend on how severe you think the illness is. Use this guidance to help you make that judgement. Remember: if you're concerned about your child's health, consult a health professional.

Please note: if you feel your child is well enough to be in school, they will be expected to participate in all curriculum activities, including PE and swimming.

- **Vomiting and diarrhoea.** Children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting should **definitely be kept off school until at least 48 hours after their symptoms have gone**. Most cases of [diarrhoea and vomiting in children](#) get better without treatment, but if symptoms persist, consult your GP. If we feel your child has come back to school too early, we will contact you.
- **Cough and cold.** A child with a minor cough or cold may attend school. If the cold is accompanied by a raised temperature, shivers or drowsiness, the child should stay off school, visit the GP and return to school 24 hours after they start to feel better. If your child has a more severe and long-lasting cough, consult your GP. They can give guidance on whether your child should stay off school. Get more information in [Common cold](#).
- **Raised temperature.** If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return 24 hours after they start to feel better. Learn more in [Feverish illness in children](#).
- **Rash.** Skin rashes can be the first sign of many infectious illnesses, such as chickenpox and measles. Children with these conditions shouldn't attend school. If your child has a rash, check with your GP or practice nurse before sending them to school. [Watch this slideshow of childhood illnesses](#) to help you recognise your child's rash.
- **Headache.** A child with a minor headache doesn't usually need to be kept off school. If the headache is more severe or is accompanied by other symptoms, such as raised temperature or drowsiness, then keep the child off school and consult your GP. Read more about what to do about [headaches in children](#).
- **Sore throat.** A sore throat alone doesn't have to keep a child from school. But if it's accompanied by a raised temperature, your child should stay at home. Read more about [sore throat](#).
- **Chickenpox.** If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all their spots have crusted over. Read more about [chickenpox](#).
- **Scarlet Fever and Strep A**

The following information has been published by the department for education

Scarlet Fever and Group Strep A Infections

The Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan, is closely monitoring the increased cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) and scarlet fever. As a Department, we are working closely with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), who are leading on the response.

UKHSA is reporting an increased number of cases of Group A streptococcus (Strep A) compared to normal at this time of year. There is no evidence that a new strain is circulating and the increase is most likely related to high amounts of circulating bacteria and social mixing.

What are scarlet fever and Strep A?

Scarlet fever is caused by bacteria called Group A streptococci (Strep A). The bacteria usually cause a mild infection that can be easily treated with antibiotics.

In very rare occasions, the bacteria can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A strep (iGAS).

What are the symptoms of Strep A/scarlet fever?

Strep A infections can cause a range of symptoms that parents should be aware of, including:

- › Sore throat
- › Headache
- › Fever
- › A fine, pinkish or red body rash with a sandpapery feel
- › On darker skin the rash can be more difficult to detect visually but will have a sandpapery feel

If a child becomes unwell with these symptoms, please advise parents to contact their GP practice or contact NHS 111 (which operates a 24/7 service) to seek advice.

If a child has scarlet fever, advise they stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Encourage parents to trust their own judgement and if their child seems seriously unwell call 999 or go to A&E if:

- › a child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
- › there are pauses when a child breathes
- › a child's [skin, tongue or lips are blue](#)
- › a child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

How to help prevent Strep A?

To prevent the spread of Strep A, UKHSA advises children, young people and staff to implement good [hand and respiratory hygiene](#) practices.

For more information visit the UKHSA [website](#) or the [Education Hub](#).

Resources will be made available in due course on the [online resource centre](#).

If your child develops symptoms of an illness at school, and we feel they are too unwell to stay, **we will, of course, contact you.**

Please always ensure that your child washes their hands regularly, to help prevent the spread of illnesses.