

# Strep A

**Strep A is a common type of bacteria. Most strep A infections are mild and easily treated, but some are more serious.**

## Symptoms of a strep A infection

Common symptoms of strep A include:

- [flu-like symptoms](#), such as a high temperature, swollen glands or an aching body
- [sore throat](#) (strep throat or [tonsillitis](#))
- a rash that feels rough, like sandpaper ([scarlet fever](#))
- scabs and sores ([impetigo](#))
- pain and swelling ([cellulitis](#))
- severe muscle aches
- nausea and vomiting

Most strep A infections are not serious and can be treated with antibiotics.

But rarely, the infection can cause serious problems. This is called invasive group A strep (iGAS).

**Urgent advice:  
Get an urgent GP appointment or get help from NHS 111 if:**

- your child is unwell and is getting worse
- your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
- your child has fewer wet nappies than usual or is peeing less than usual, or shows other signs of dehydration
- your baby is under 3 months and has a temperature of 38C, or is 3 to 6 months and has a temperature of 39C or higher
- your child is very tired or irritable

It's important to trust your instincts if your child is unwell. Get medical help if you think you need it.

[Check symptoms on 111 online](#) (for children aged 5 and over) or call 111 (for children under 5).

## Immediate action required: Call 999 or go to A&E if:

- your child is having difficulty breathing – they may make grunting noises, or you may notice their tummy sucking under their ribs
- there are pauses when your child breathes
- your child's skin, tongue or lips are blue or grey – on black or brown skin this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet
- your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake

**Find your nearest A&E**

## Treatments for a strep A infection

Most strep A infections can be easily treated with [antibiotics](#).

If you or your child has a strep A infection, you should stay away from nursery, school or work for 24 hours after you start taking antibiotics. This will help stop the infection spreading to other people.

Serious strep A infections (invasive group A strep, iGAS) need to be treated in hospital with antibiotics.

## How you get strep A infections

Strep A infections are spread by close contact with an infected person. They can be passed on through coughs and sneezes or from a wound.

In some people, the bacteria live in the body without causing symptoms or making them feel unwell. But they can still pass the bacteria on to others.

Things that might make you more at risk of strep A infections include:

- a weakened immune system
- open sores or wounds
- some viral infections, such as a cold or flu

## How to avoid getting infections

Infections like strep A can easily be spread to other people.

To reduce the chance of catching or spreading an infection:

- wash your hands often with soap and water
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- bin used tissues as quickly as possible

[Find out how to wash your hands to prevent the spread of germs](#)

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