

Scarlet Fever

Definition

- Scarlet Fever is a speckled, red rash all over due to the Strep bacteria

Health Information

Symptoms

- Reddened, sunburned-looking skin
- Starts on upper chest and quickly spreads to lower chest and stomach
- The rash is almost everywhere within 24 hours
- Looking closely, the redness is speckled with tiny pink dots
- Rough, sandpaper-like feeling to the reddened skin
- Increased redness in skin folds (especially the groin, armpits, and elbow creases)
- Flushed face with paleness around the mouth
- Sore throat and fever usually occur before the rash by 18 to 24 hours

Cause

- Caused by a toxin produced by strep bacteria
- A strep throat infection with a rash
- Can also occur with a strep infection in a wound
- Can get scarlet fever up to 3 times (reason: 3 different toxins)

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Good hand washing can prevent the spread.

Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
 - Scarlet fever is a strep throat infection with a rash.
 - The complication rate is no different than for strep throat alone.
 - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Antibiotic by Mouth:**
 - Scarlet fever needs a prescription antibiotic to clear it up.
 - This medicine will kill the Strep bacteria causing the rash and sore throat.
 - Give the medicine as directed.
 - Try not to forget any of the doses.
3. **Sore Throat Pain Relief:**
 - Age over 1 year. Can sip warm fluids such as chicken broth or apple juice.
 - Age over 6 years. Can also suck on hard candy or lollipops. Butterscotch seems to help.
 - Age over 8 years. Can also gargle. Use warm water with a little table salt added. A liquid antacid can be added instead of salt. Use Mylanta or the store brand. No prescription is needed.
 - Medicated throat sprays or lozenges are generally not helpful.
4. **Soft Diet:**
 - Offer a soft diet. Cold drinks and milk shakes may soothe the pain.

5. **Pain Medicine:**
 - To help with the throat pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
6. **Fever:**
 - For fevers above 102° F (39° C), give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Note: Lower fevers are important for fighting infections.
 - For ALL fevers: Keep your child well hydrated. Give lots of cold fluids.
7. **Scarlet Fever Rash Treatment:**
 - The rash itself usually needs no special treatment.
 - When the rash peels, it may become a little itchy.
 - If that's the case, apply a moisturizing cream as needed.
8. **Strep Tests for the Family:**
 - Scarlet fever and strep throat can spread to others in the family.
 - Household members who develop symptoms in the next 5 days should have a Strep test.
9. **What to Expect:**
 - The red rash often lasts 5 to 7 days.
 - When the rash clears, the skin often peels for another week. Peeling is common in the groin.
10. **Return to School:**
 - Your child can return after the fever is gone. Your child should also be taking an antibiotic by mouth for 24 hours.
 - The rash cannot spread to others, but the strep throat can.

Call Your Doctor If

- Fever lasts more than 48 hours after starting the antibiotic
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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