



Our reference: HPZ193618

Re: Noah's Ark Nursery Plymouth PL1 4DW – Scarlet Fever and Chicken pox

Date 19th July 2018

Dear colleagues,

There is currently an outbreak of suspected scarlet fever and chickenpox at Noah's Ark Nursery, next door to the Green Ark Children's Centre in Devonport, Plymouth. You will be aware that concomitant infection of scarlet fever and chickenpox may lead to serious complications including invasive Group A Streptococcal infection.

We are holding a vaccination clinic on Friday 20th July at the neighbouring Green Ark Children's Centre to offer chickenpox vaccination to all staff and children at the nursery who have not already had chickenpox.

So please be vigilant for both chickenpox and scarlet fever if you are assessing any of the children or staff from Noah's Ark. If you clinically confirm either of these infections from Noah's Ark or Green Ark, please would you inform the HPT on the telephone number above.

If you suspect scarlet fever, please prescribe the appropriate antibiotics and advise exclusion for 24 hours after commencement of antibiotics. Those with chicken pox need to be excluded for 5 days after the onset of spots and spots are scabbed over.

Signs and symptoms of scarlet fever

Scarlet fever is a common childhood infection caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*, or group A streptococcus (GAS). **The symptoms are non-specific in early illness and may include sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting.** After 12 to 48 hours the characteristic red, generalised pinhead rash develops, typically first appearing on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body, giving the skin a sandpaper-like texture. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, although the 'sandpaper' feel should be present. Patients typically have flushed cheeks and pallor around the mouth. This may be accompanied by a 'strawberry tongue'. During convalescence desquamation of the skin occurs at the tips of fingers and toes, less often over wide areas of the trunk and limbs.

The differential diagnosis will include measles, glandular fever and slapped cheek infections.

Complications of scarlet fever

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, patients can develop complications such as an ear infection, throat abscess, pneumonia, sinusitis or meningitis in the early stages and acute glomerulonephritis and acute rheumatic fever at a later stage. Patients, or their parents, should keep an eye out for any symptoms which might suggest these complications and if concerned advised to seek medical help immediately.

Thank you for your help

If you have any queries please contact the SW(S) Health Protection Team on 0300 303 8162 (option 1, then option 1).

Yours faithfully,



Dr Fiona Neely

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Consultant in Health Protection

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Public Health England