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| **Director of Public Health** |  |
| Stuart Keeble |  |

**Date: December 12th 2022 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Dear Parent,

**Use the right services for your needs, this winter**

Further to our previous correspondence about Scarlet Fever, we would like to share the following update from our local health leaders, to help you to access the right services for your needs this winter

Winter traditionally sees an increase in coughs, colds and other respiratory illnesses. UK Health Security Agency states that in addition to these symptoms, there has also been an increase in a bacterial infection this year, caused by the Group A Streptococcus bacteria, particularly among children which has led to a higher incidence of scarlet fever.

Group A Streptococcus bacteria can cause a range of other types of infection, such as skin infections (impetigo) and sore throat and in very rare occasions, it can get into the bloodstream and cause an illness called invasive Group A Strep (iGAS). The UKHSA added this can be very serious, particularly in older, younger and more vulnerable groups.

It can be worrying when your child is ill, but advice on what do can be found using NHS 111 online <https://111.nhs.uk/> at any time. Online access is usually quicker and just as good as calling on your phone – please use this first if you can.

If your child has very minor symptoms (e.g. a runny nose) but seems otherwise well with no fever, there is no need to contact your GP. If your child has a fever, try giving them Calpol or paracetamol and reassess after 1-2 hours.

There is no need to contact your GP if your child has no symptoms but has been in contact with another child/adult with Strep A infection.

However, clinicians say, as a parent, you are an expert in your child. If you feel your child is seriously unwell, or you feel outside of your comfort zone you should trust your own judgement and contact NHS 111 or your GP.

Contact NHS 111 or your GP if:

* your child is getting worse
* your child is feeding or eating much less than normal
* your child has had a dry nappy for 12 hours or more or shows other [**signs of dehydration**](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=lWhE-e5GCnnvab4RtwbIZHGmXaqHhqrB-s58tVXEwdHnpDBewfp4JCIQcwkC4O7S7msDPoXiNvQKedjZXiZykWDnvlBjpYEVj8uMsk0yfl0nnQr1ZT1B4krGQoOxSpEaIxt_kR-_97_wzwdzhZQtp9A6KpWkvvyAIa5s-iQMNNrr0)
* your baby is under three months and has a temperature of 38°C, or is older than three months and has a temperature of 39°C or higher
* your baby feels hotter than usual when you touch their back or chest, or feels sweaty
* your child is very tired or irritable.

Call 999 or go to A&E if:

* your child is having difficulty breathing – you may notice grunting noises or their tummy sucking under their ribs
* there are pauses when your child breathes
* your child’s [skin, tongue or lips are blue](http://tracking.vuelio.co.uk/tracking/click?d=TGc6SPNa6wsf0a20tv6iVQSOVEEvxzHJ5QXLbVseo5-qVhXYH6uKWoiY7B4eDHXWVUvkgXiCK2dUG8-IZp1MTwyKWKxxd8qy_VwQ_bcC0dy7QYftMBprFXgnXsi7Ulr_d0mNab8h-aL3OH_v3h7QN1a7Ff3ChJ4mMFAWioD1mPTLdfidQq3yphNL-dnhZFczQA2)
* your child is floppy and will not wake up or stay awake.

You can help to reduce the risk of being exposed to bugs or stop the spread by teaching your child to wash their hand regularly with soap for 20 seconds, using tissues to catch coughs/sneezes, and staying away from others when feeling unwell.

Yours Sincerely,



Stuart Keeble

Director Public Health Suffolk