

Date: 2023-02-03

**Region Västra Götaland  
Infectious Disease Control  
Västra Götaland**

To guardians

## **Streptococcus infections in preschools**

Infections caused by streptococcus bacteria are common among children of preschool age. These bacteria can cause strep throat, impetigo (swinepox), scarlet fever, paronychia (nail infection) and perianal strep infections (discharges, itching and rash in the genital and anal area). Many children of preschool age have streptococcus bacteria in their throat without being ill. Symptom-free carriers are usually not treated with antibiotics.

### **Routes of transmission and the spread of infection**

Bacteria spread through coughing, sneezing and saliva, also known as droplet spread. They also spread through contact transmission, which includes hands which have come into contact with saliva or exudate (fluid from e.g. a wound). Infection can also spread via toys that an infected child has sucked on, and via towels, cuddly toys and handkerchiefs. It takes between 1 and 3 days for the illness to appear after a person has been infected. Dermal (skin) infections are more easily transmitted than strep throat. A person with symptoms is more infectious than a healthy carrier. Because streptococcus infections are very contagious, other members of the family may become ill as well.

### **Treatment**

Contact the medical care centre where your child is listed, for assessment and possible treatment. Tell the staff if there are streptococcus infections circulating at your child's preschool.

Should my child stay at home?

Yes. How long your child stays at home will be determined by the types of symptoms they have and the treatment they receive. In the case of strep throat and scarlet fever treated with antibiotics, your child can return to preschool after two days' treatment, if the treatment has shown a noticeable effect and your child feels fine. Without antibiotics, your child has to be free of symptoms before returning to preschool. In the case of dermal infections (impetigo, paronychia and perianal strep infection) it may take longer for your child to become non-infectious. Regardless of the treatment used, sores have to have healed and be without scabs before they can return to preschool.

## Advice on hygiene

You can reduce transmission by:

- Washing your own and your child's hand with soap and water frequently. Always wash hands before meals, particularly when no cutlery is used (e.g. when eating sandwiches and fruit).
- Don't share mugs, cutlery or toothbrushes with someone who is ill.
- Keep your child's fingernails short and avoid using nail varnish – that makes it easier to keep them clean.
- Avoid sharing hand towels within the family – make sure each family member has their own.
- Change pillowcases and hand towels. Do so every day if there is a facial rash.
- If there is a rash, avoid touching it as much as possible. Wash hands thoroughly after any contact with the rash, such as after treating it.
- Wash toys, cuddly toys and other things your child sucks on.
- Reduce the risk of recurring infection by boiling or replacing your child's dummies and toothbrush once they have recovered. If the infection is being treated with antibiotics, do this after 3–4 days' treatment.

For additional information about scarlet fever, [read more on 1177.se](https://www.1177.se)

For additional information about strep throat, [read more on 1177.se](https://www.1177.se)

For additional information about impetigo, [read more on 1177.se](https://www.1177.se)

(the information is in Swedish)