

UK officials warn over Strep infections after child deaths

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UK health officials on Friday warned parents to be alert for scarlet fever symptoms in their children, following the death of six youngsters from a more serious Group A strep-related illness.

Britain's Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said five under-10s in England and another in Wales had died after being diagnosed with the rare invasive Group A strep (iGAS) illness.

UKHSA Deputy Director Colin Brown said the UK was "seeing a higher number of cases of Group A strep this year than usual" but resulting serious illnesses were "still uncommon".

"The bacteria usually causes a mild infection producing [sore throats](#) or [scarlet fever](#) that can be easily treated with antibiotics," he added.

"However, it is important that parents are on the lookout for symptoms and see a doctor as quickly as possible so that their child can be treated and we can stop the infection becoming serious."

Brown urged parents to talk to a health professional if their child showed "signs of deteriorating after a bout of scarlet fever, a [sore throat](#), or a [respiratory infection](#)".

The UKHSA said there were 851 scarlet fever cases reported in England in the most recent week with statistics available, compared to an average of 186 for the preceding years.

Investigations are also underway following reports of an increase in lower respiratory tract Group A strep infections in children over the past few weeks, which have caused [severe illness](#).

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