



### **Increase in viral infections and Group A Strep infections**

Please see attached an important letter from HSE colleagues, which you are asked to bring to the attention of parents, guardians and staff.

There has been a significant increase in viral infections and Group A Strep infections among children and young people this winter. There have also been recent concerns about a rare bacterial infection. This infection is iGAS (an invasive Group A Streptococcal infection). It is and also known as Group A Strep.

Given the potential seriousness of the situation we are asking you to circulate this letter to parents. The letter contains important information on viral and Group A Strep infections with useful links for additional information.

John Curtis  
General Secretary  
8<sup>th</sup> December 2022



**TO:** All Principals, for sharing with parents, guardians and staff

**FROM:** Dr Eamonn O'Moore, Director National Health Protection;  
Dr Abigail Collins, National Clinical Lead Child Health Public Health

**RE:** Significant increase in viral infections and Group A Strep infections

**DATE:** 7th December 2022

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There has been a large increase in general viral infections among children and young people this winter.

There have also been recent concerns about a rare bacterial infection. This infection is iGAS (an invasive Group A Streptococcal infection). It is and also known as Group A Strep.

### **Significant increase in viral infections**

We have seen a significant increase in the usual winter viral infections. This includes an increase in flu. This is because children are mixing together more. In previous years social contact was much reduced. This in turn reduced the rates of routine infection.

### **Typical symptoms of viral infections**

Symptoms of viral infections typically include:

- runny or blocked nose
- mild fever
- cough
- lethargy (tiredness)

Many children with viral infections also have a generalised rash.

Most children with viral infections can safely be cared for at home.

More information can be found at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>

### **Group A Strep and related bacterial infections**

There have been cases of serious bacterial infections, specifically Group A Strep.

Severe infection is rare. Group A Strep more commonly causes infections such as:

- tonsillitis
- scarlet fever
- skin infections

Ireland has seen cases of more serious infections recently. But so far there has been no increase compared to what we saw before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Information about managing illnesses of concern will continue to be updated on hse.ie over coming days and weeks.

## **Important messages for families and children regarding *any* infections:**

### **1) The most important measure is to stay home if you are unwell.**

Many children might have a runny nose or a slight cough in winter season. However, if a child is feeling unwell they should be at home. For example, they may have:

- **fever**
- **cough**, and
- **sore throat**

They should stay at home until those symptoms have finished.

See <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>

Children with symptoms are more likely to spread infections. For example, they may spread flu or bacterial infections. Staying home when unwell will help prevent spread to other children, families and staff.

### **2) Infection, prevention and control measures**

- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Keep hands clean

These measures that we all got used to with Covid-19 are still important. They should be encouraged for everyone. These measures help stop the spread of infection.

### **3) Vaccination**

Making sure your child is up to date on all recommended vaccinations will help:

- stop your child getting an infection and
- make them less likely to be unwell if they do get an infection

Routine childhood vaccinations protect against many significant viral and bacterial infections.

There is no vaccine against many viral illnesses or Strep A.

More information is available at <https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/vaccines-your-child/>

#### **Flu vaccine**

The nasal spray flu vaccine is available for children aged 2 to 17 years. It helps protect against severe infection with flu and onward spread.

See <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/childrens-flu-vaccine/>

Many adults are also recommended to have the flu vaccine.

More information is available at [www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/getting-the-vaccine/](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/getting-the-vaccine/)

Vaccination for Covid-19 is still available. Visit [www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/children/](https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/children/)

The most important ways to prevent the spread of all infections are:

- making sure anyone unwell stays at home
- children and adults are up to date with their recommended vaccines, including flu

#### **4. If you are concerned about your child**

If you are concerned your child may be unwell, please check hse.ie. There is information on coughs, colds, fever, rashes and symptoms of concern. There is advice on when to contact your GP or go to a hospital emergency department. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>



**DO:** Príomhoidí uile, le roinnt le tuismitheoirí, caomhnóirí agus foirne

**Ó:** Dr Eamonn O'Moore, Stiúrthóir, Cosaint Sláinte Naisiúnta;  
Dr Abigail Collins, Ceannasaí Náisiúnta Sláinte Leanaí, Sláinte Poiblí

**RE:** Méadú suntasach ar ionfhabhtuithe víreasacha agus ionfhabhtuithe Strep Grúpa A

**DÁTA:** 7 Nollaig 2022

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Tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar líon na n-ionfhabhtuithe víreasacha go ginearálta i measc leanaí agus daoine óga an gheimhreadh seo.

Tá imní chomh maith faoi ionfhabhtú neamhchoitianta baictéarach le déanaí. An t-ionfhabhtú seo ná iGAS (ionfhabhtú ionrach Streipteacocúil Grúpa A). Strep Grúpa A a thugtar air chomh maith.

### **Meadú suntasach ar ionfhabhtuithe víreasacha**

Tá méadú suntasach tagtha ar líon na ngnáthionfhabhtuithe víreasacha geimhridh. Ina measc seo tá méadú ar an bhfliú. Is toisc go bhfuil leanaí ag meascadh lé chéile níos minicí atá seo ag tarlú. Sna blianta roimhe seo, bhí níos lú caidrimh sóisialta ann, rud a laghdaigh rátaí ghnáthionfhabhtuithe.

### **Gnáthsíomptóim ionfhabhtuithe víreasacha**

I measc ghnáthsíomptóim ionfhabhtuithe víreasacha tá:

- Srón smaoiseach nó blocáilte
- Fiabhras éadrom
- casacht
- marbhántacht (tuirse)

Bíonn gríos ginearálaithe ar roinnt leanaí le hionfhabhtuithe víreasacha.

Is féidir cúram a thabhairt d'fhormhór leanaí le hionfhabhtuithe víreasacha go sábháilte sa bhaile.

Tá tuilleadh eolais le fáil ar <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>

### **Strep Grúpa A agus ionfhabhtuithe baictéaracha ceangailte**

Tá cásanna dáiríre ann d'ionfhabhtuithe baictéaracha, go sonrach Strep Grúpa A.

Is annamh a bhíonn ionfhabhtuithe dian. De ghnáth, cúisíonn Strep Grúpa A ionfhabhtuithe cosúil le:

- céislíníteas
- fiabhras dearg
- ionfhabhtú craicinn

Tá cásanna feicthe in Éirinn atá níos dáiríre le déanaí, ach níl aon méadú go dtí seo i gcomparáid leis na leibhéil a bhí ann roimh na paidéime Covid-19.

Cuirfear eolas maidir le galair a chúisíonn inní ar hse.ie thar na laethanta agus seachtainí atá le teacht.

## **Teachtaireachtaí tabhachtacha do theaghlaigh agus leanaí maidir le ionfhabhtú *ar bith*:**

### **1) Is éard is tábhachtaí ná fanacht sa bhaile má tá tú tinn.**

Is minic a bhíonn srón smaoiseach nó casacht éadrom ar leanbh le linn an gheimhridh. Má tá leanbh tinn, áfach, ba chóir dóibh bheith sa bhaile. Mar shampla, d'fhéadfadh go bhfuil acu:

- **fiabhras**
- **casacht**, agus
- **scornach tinn**

Ba chóir don leanbh fanacht sa bhaile go dtí go bhfuil deireadh leis na siomptóim sin.

Féach <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>

Is dóichí go scapfadh leanaí le siomptóim ionfhabhtuithe. Mar shampla, d'fhéadfaidís fliú nó ionfhabhtuithe baictéaracha a scapadh. Má fhanann said sa bhaile agus iad tinn, seachnófar scapadh i measc leanaí eile, teaghlach agus foirne.

### **2) Modhanna coisc agus smachta ar ionfhabhtuithe**

- Clúdaigh casacht agus sraothanna
- Coimeád lámha glan

Tá tábhacht fós ag baint leis na bearta seo a ndeachamar i dtaithí orthu le linn Covid-19. Ba chóir iad a mholadh do chách. Cuireann na bearta seo cosc ar scapadh ionfhabhtuithe.

### **3) Vacsaíniú**

Má tá do leanbh suas-chun-dáta ar na vacsaíní uile a mholtar, cuideoidh sé chun:

- cosc a chur ar do leanbh ionfhabhtú a fháil agus
- an dóchúlacht go n-éiríonn siad tinn a laghdú sa chás go bhfaigheann said ionfhabhtú

Cosnaíonn gnáthvacsaíní na hóige leanaí ó roinnt mhaith ionfhabhtuithe suntasacha víreasacha agus baictéaracha.

Níl aon vaicsín i gcoinne roinnt ghalar víreasacha ná i gcoinne Streip A.

Tuilleadh eolais ar <https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/vaccines-your-child/>

#### **Vaicsín fliú**

Tá an vacsaín fliú ar fail i bhfoirm sprae sróine do leanaí d'aois idir 2 agus 17 bliana. Cuidíonn sé cosaint in aghaidh dianionfhabhtú agus scapadh ar aghaidh.

Féach <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/childrens-flu-vaccine/>

Moltar do roinnt mhaith daoine fásta an vaicsín fliú a fháil.

Tuilleadh eolais ar [www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/getting-the-vaccine/](https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/flu/getting-the-vaccine/)

Vaicíniú in aghaidh Covid-19 fós ar fáil. Féach

[www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/children/](http://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/get-the-vaccine/children/)

Na bealaí is tábhachtaí scapadh gach ionfhabhtaithe ná:

- déanamh cinnte go bhfanann aon duine tinn sa bhaile
- go mbeadh leanaí agus daoine fásta suas-chun-dáta lena vaicsíní molta, ina measc an fliú

#### **4) Má tá imní ort faoi do leanbh**

Má tá imní ort maidir le do leanbh, téigh go hse.ie. Tá eolas ansin ar chasacht, slaghdáin, fiabhrais, gríosú agus siomptóim eile a mbeadh imní ort fúthu. Tá comhairle ann maidir le cathain dul i dteagmháil le do dhochtúir teaghlaigh nó freastal ar rannóg éigeandála an ospidéil.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/colds-coughs-children/>

## 2022-23 Bulletins are listed below

All Bulletins can be found [here](#) on the JMB website

Bulletin No:	Type	Topic
1	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New Circulars on Parent's Leave for Teachers and SNAs</li> <li>2. School Management Advisor</li> <li>3. JMB Pre-Budget Submission 2023</li> </ol>
2	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Boards of Management</li> <li>2. A Manual for Boards of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (2021 Edition)</li> </ol>
3	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leaving Certificate 2022 – Important Information in Advance of the Issue of the Provisional Results</li> <li>2. Deputy President AMCSS/JMB</li> </ol>
4	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Croke Park Hours and Circular M58/04 – Teaching Staff</li> <li>2. Croke Park Hours and June Working – SNAs</li> </ol>
5		Guidelines for the implementation of the compulsory supervision and substitution scheme in each school
6	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated Inspectorate Policy Documents, SSE Circular 2022-2026, and Revised 'Looking at our School'</li> <li>2. JMB Representatives to Three NCCA Senior Cycle Development Groups</li> </ol>
7	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School Immunisation Programme</li> <li>2. Biennial Review -Middle Leadership and Management</li> </ol>
8	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting Ukrainian Students and their Families</li> <li>2. Consultation on the Draft Updated Junior Cycle SPHE/RSE specification</li> <li>3. Catholic Schools - Online Survey of RE Teachers</li> </ol>
9	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information Regarding Covid-19</li> <li>2. Information and Support regarding pupils/students from Ukraine</li> </ol>
10		Minister Foley announces adjustments to 2023 State Examinations
11		Return of the JMB Mindfulness Programme for 2022/23
12	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Filling leadership and management posts</li> <li>2. Assessment of Education Needs under the Disability Act 2005</li> <li>3. SNAs – Use of the 72 hours as provided for in Circular Letter 0071/2011</li> </ol>



13		Information Note TC 0009/2022 Revision of Salaries and Annual Leave arrangements for School Secretaries employed in recognised primary and post-primary schools
14	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information Note - Temporary lifting of restrictions in Career Break Scheme</li> <li>2. Ukrainian Students Travelling on School Tours / Study Trips</li> <li>3. Additional SET allocation by NCSE to schools</li> <li>4. Amendment to Circular 0003/2018, Leadership and Management in Post Primary Schools</li> </ol>
15	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ESRI / JMB Research Study: 'Exploring the Value of the Voluntary Secondary Sector in Irish Education'</li> <li>2. Catholic schools: Association of Patrons and Trustees of Catholic Schools (APTCS) seminar and information</li> </ol>
16	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background Paper and Brief for the Redevelopment of Senior Cycle SPHE</li> <li>2. Junior Cycle Examination Results 2022</li> </ol>
17	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. October Returns</li> <li>2. Final date for the appointment of permanent and regular part-time (RPT) teachers for the school year 2022/23</li> <li>3. Nursing Pilot Scheme for Children with Complex Healthcare needs</li> <li>4. Summer Programmes 2023</li> </ol>
18		JMB Job Vacancy: General Secretary
19		Catholic Schools: Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) Resources
20	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teaching Hours Extension Scheme 2022/2023</li> <li>2. Provision for Students with Special Educational Needs at Post-Primary Level</li> </ol>
21	Composite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guidance to Schools Regarding the use of Physical Fitness Testing in Physical Education lessons</li> <li>2. Enhancement to Irish Sign Language (ISL) Scheme</li> <li>3. Senior Cycle SPHE Consultation</li> <li>4. Graduate Diploma in SPHE and RSE 2023</li> </ol>
22		Inspectorate evaluation of Special Classes
23		Admission Policies of all schools
24		Important update re Bulletin 23 – Required Changes to Admission Policies
25		Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

26		Leaving Certificate Oral Language Examinations in 2023