Scarlet fever, sometimes called scarlatina, is a disease caused by a bacteria called group A Streptococcus or "group A strep", the same bacteria that causes strep throat. Scarlet fever is a rash that sometimes occurs in people that have strep throat.

Did You Know?
People with scarlet fever typically also have a high fever and a strawberry-like appearance of the tongue. The rash of scarlet fever is usually seen in children under the age of 18.

How is strep throat spread?
Strep throat is spread to other persons from nose and throat secretions of infected persons or carriers; rarely, indirect contact through objects. Outbreaks may follow ingestion of food contaminated by an infected food handler’s nasal secretions or strep bacteria present on skin.

What are the symptoms of strep throat?
The symptoms are usually sudden onset of fever, sore throat with exudates (bumps or white patches), swollen glands, headache, abdominal pain. Nausea and vomiting may occur with severe cases, as may kidney problems, peri-tonsillar abscesses, or rheumatic fever.

Scarlet fever is characterized by a fever, sore throat, red sandpaper-like rash and a red strawberry” tongue. It is caused by several different strains of the streptococcal bacteria, all of which produce a toxin that causes the characteristic red rash.

How long do symptoms last?
Symptoms usually 1-3 days, rarely longer.

When and for how long is a person able to spread strep?
Only 24 hours after treatment has begun. In untreated and uncomplicated cases, 10-21 days; in untreated conditions with purulent discharges, weeks or months.

What is the treatment for strep throat?
Antibiotics are often prescribed. Treatment can prevent more serious complications such as rheumatic fever, which can damage the heart. It is often treated in the same manner as strep throat.

How do I prevent the spread of Strep Throat or Scarlet Fever?
-Visit a medical provider for treatment and complete the full course of antibiotics.
-Children should stay out of school or childcare until at least 24 hours after antibiotics have been started.
-Encourage children to practice good health habits of washing their hands and coughing and sneezing into their sleeves and not their hands.
-Do not share eating or drinking utensils.