

Bronchiolitis Advice Sheet

(a cause of persistent cough, mild fever and feeding difficulties in infants)

Advice for parents and carers of children younger than 1 year old



How is your child? (traffic light advice)



RED

If your child has any one of these below:

- Has blue lips
- or is unresponsive or very irritable
- or is struggling to breathe
- or has pauses in breathing
- or has an irregular breathing pattern

You need urgent help

please phone 999 or go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department.



AMBER

If your child has any one of these below:

- decreased feeding (less than 2/3 of normal feeds)
- or is passing less urine than normal
- or is vomiting
- or temperature is above 38°C
- or is finding it difficult to breathe
- or if your child's health gets worse or you are worried

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111



GREEN

If none of the features in the red or amber boxes above are present.

Self Care

Using the advice overleaf you can look after your child at home

Some useful phone numbers (You may want to add some numbers on here too)



GP Surgery
(make a note of number here)

.....

NHS 111
dial 111

(available 24 hrs -
7 days a week)

**School Nurse /
Health Visiting Team**
(make a note of number here)

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For online advice: Wessex Healthier Together www.what0-18.nhs.uk (available 24 hrs/7 days a week)

Family Information Service: All areas have an online service providing useful information for Families set up by local councils

www.what0-18.nhs.uk

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What is Bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is an infectious disease when the tiniest airways in your child's lungs become swollen. This can make it more difficult for your child to breathe. Bronchiolitis is caused by virus infections. It is common in winter months and usually only causes mild cold like symptoms. Most children get better on their own. Some children, especially very young ones, can have difficulty with breathing or feeding and may need to go to hospital.

What are the symptoms?

- Your child may have a runny nose and sometimes a temperature and a cough.
- After a few days your child's cough may become worse.
- Your child's breathing may be faster than normal and it may become noisy.
- He or she may need to make more effort to breathe.
- Sometimes, in the very young babies, Bronchiolitis may cause them to have brief pauses in their breathing.
- If you are concerned see the traffic light advice overleaf.
- As breathing becomes more difficult, your baby may not be able to take their usual amount of milk by breast or bottle.
- You may notice fewer wet nappies than usual.
- Your child may vomit after feeding and become irritable.

How can I help my baby?

- If your child is not feeding as normal offer smaller feeds but more frequently.
- Children with Bronchiolitis may have some signs of distress and discomfort. You may wish to give either liquid Paracetamol or liquid Ibuprofen to give some relief of symptoms. However please note this will not change either the severity or duration of the illness. Please read and follow the instructions on the medicine container.
- Over the Counter (OTC) medicine may not be available to purchase for all age groups. Ask your pharmacist.
- If your child is already taking medicines or inhalers, you should carry on using these. If you find it difficult to get your child to take them, ask your Pharmacist, Health Visitor or GP. Bronchiolitis is caused by a virus so antibiotics will not help.
- Make sure your child is not exposed to tobacco smoke. Passive smoking can seriously damage your child's health. It makes breathing problems like bronchiolitis worse.
- Remember smoke remains on your clothes even if you smoke outside.
If you would like help to give up smoking you can get information / advice from your local GP surgery or by calling the National Stop Smoking Helpline Tel: 0800 169 0 169 from 7am to 11pm every day.

How long does Bronchiolitis last?

- Most children with bronchiolitis will seem to worsen during the first 1-3 days of the illness before beginning to improve over the next two weeks. The cough may go on for a few more weeks. Antibiotics are not required.
- Your child can go back to nursery or day care as soon as he or she is well enough (that is feeding normally and with no difficulty in breathing).
- There is usually no need to see your doctor if your child is recovering well. But if you are worried about your child's progress discuss this with your Health Visitor, Practice Nurse or GP or contact NHS 111.