

Emergency Department Discharge Advice

Bronchiolitis

What is Bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is an illness where the smallest air passages in the lungs get inflamed, causing a runny nose, cough and temperature.

Your child's breathing may become faster than usual and may become noisy. Your child may be making extra effort to breathe. Very young babies sometimes have pauses in their breathing lasting a few seconds. Your child may struggle to feed and may have fewer wet nappies than usual. Your child may vomit after feeding.

The cough and breathing often gets worse in the first few days before getting better. Most children get better within 2 weeks although a cough may linger for several weeks more.

What causes bronchiolitis?

It is caused by a virus and is most common in the winter months. It usually causes a "cold" but in some children it can cause difficulty in breathing and feeding. Children more prone to developing bronchiolitis include premature babies, babies less than 6 weeks old, babies with any cardiac or respiratory problems since birth or disabilities such as cerebral palsy.

How can I help my child?

Feeding

Offer your child smaller but more frequent feeds and/or their usual drinks to make it easier for them and keep them hydrated. You should continue breast feeding.

Breathing

Your child may find it easier to breathe in the air if the room is not too dry and the room temperature not too hot and if they aren't lying completely flat. Propping the head end of the cot up with some books under the cot legs may help.

Please turn over:

 Health & care
information
you can trust

The Information Standard  Certified Member

Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail pals@dchft.nhs.uk

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk

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Fever

You can give medication such as paracetamol for fever or discomfort.

Smoking

Make sure that your child is not exposed to tobacco smoke as this will make their breathing worse. Smoke lingers on clothes even if you smoke outside.

Medicines

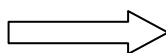
Simple medicines such as paracetamol, vaporubs or “Karvol” and saline nasal drops may make your child feel more comfortable – you can talk to your pharmacist about these. Antibiotics **do not** help in bronchiolitis as it is caused by a virus. Inhalers are of very limited benefit and are rarely needed. If your child is already taking medicines, then carry on giving these.

Do I need to see a doctor again?

Bronchiolitis can get worse before it gets better.

If your child develops any of the following signs:

- Blue lips
- Struggling to breathe
- Pauses in breathing or an irregular breathing pattern
- Unresponsive to you

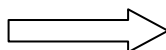


You need urgent help

Go to your nearest
A&E straight away or

Call 999

- Feeding much less than usual
- Having less wet nappies than usual
- Temperature 39°C or above
- You are otherwise worried



You need to see a nurse or
doctor

Ring your GP surgery or
Out Of Hours GP or walk-in
GP centre

Can my child go to playgroup?

It is recommended that your child stays away from nursery/ playgroup for 7 to 10 days. If your child still has a productive cough it is possible that he/she is still infectious – therefore if you have relatives/friends with small babies that they are kept apart from your child for a total of 7 to 10 days to prevent the spread of the infection.