

What if we need to go to hospital?

Some babies may develop difficulty in breathing or feeding and may need to be admitted to hospital. Babies or young children who were born prematurely or have other health problems are more likely to need treatment in hospital.

Treatment may include:

- Observations
- Oxygen treatment
- Support with feeding and hydration

As bronchiolitis is caused by a virus, antibiotics won't help so these will not be used in the treatment.

Difficulty in breathing

This might include:

- Sucking in of the chest below the ribcage
- Sucking in-between the ribs
- Nose flaring
- Noisy breathing

Traffic Light Symptoms

When do I need to see a doctor?



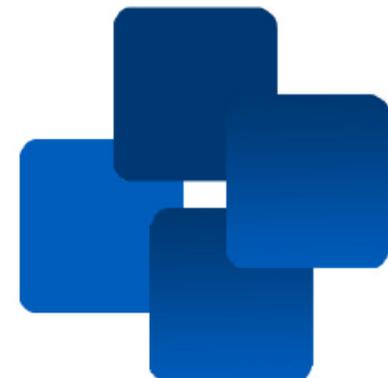
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Information
for parents and guardians
this winter

Bronchiolitis



What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a very common viral infection that affects babies and young children, causing difficulty with their breathing. This is because the virus causes lots of mucus to build up in their nose and other breathing channels.

Most babies who develop bronchiolitis will not have a serious infection, but the symptoms can be quite worrying for parents.

What are the symptoms of bronchiolitis?

The early symptoms are similar to those of a common cold, such as:

- Blocked or runny nose
- Coughing

Further symptoms then usually develop over the next few days, including:

- Mild fever (slight high temperature)
- Breathing problems, such as noisy breathing, fast breathing, sucking in of their chest
- Difficulties with feeding, which might include vomiting or a lack of interest in feeding
- Unusual pauses in breathing are sometimes seen in young babies

Who is affected?

Bronchiolitis is very common. Around one in three children in the UK will develop bronchiolitis during their first year of life. It is most common in babies between three and six months of age.

Bronchiolitis is most widespread during the winter (from November to March). It's possible to get bronchiolitis more than once during the same season.

What can I do to prevent it?

Simple hygiene measures can help, but viruses are easily spread and are common in every community.

Steps you can take at home:

- Wash your hands and your child's hands frequently, especially before and after eating or when touching noses and mouths.
- Use disposable tissues.
- Wash or wipe toys and surfaces regularly.
- If your child develops a cold, keep your child at home until their symptoms improve.
- Keep newborn babies away from those who have colds or flu.
- Prevent your child from being exposed to tobacco smoke, it makes breathing problems like bronchiolitis worse.

What can I do at home?

Most cases of bronchiolitis are mild and many babies can be looked after at home.

If your baby is feeding well, has only a mild temperature and is breathing well, they can be cared for at home - **See the traffic light system on the back of this leaflet.**

Bronchiolitis usually lasts for around two weeks with the symptoms usually worse between day three and day five.

Steps you can take at home:

- Babies/children may be more comfortable in a more upright position whilst awake, and when they're trying to feed.
- Check on your child often, including through the night.
- If your child is being breastfed or bottle-fed, try giving them smaller feeds more frequently. Some additional water or fruit juice may stop them becoming dehydrated.
- Saline drops from the pharmacist can be used to help clear a blocked nose (use as directed by the manufacturer).
- Paracetamol can be used if your child has a fever. Give the dose recommended for your child's age.
- Make sure your baby/child is not exposed to tobacco smoke.