

Bronchiolitis in Children

What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a condition where a viral illness affects the small airways in the lungs. The airways become swollen and narrowed making it difficult for the baby or child to breathe. Most babies and children get better on their own but some, particularly the very young ones, can have difficulty feeding or get tired with the work of breathing and need some extra oxygen, and so need to come into hospital. Antibiotics are not helpful in bronchiolitis because it is a viral infection and antibiotics only help with bacterial infections.

What are the symptoms of bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis usually starts with a runny nose, temperature and cough. The cough will often get worse over the next 4 or 5 days. Your child or baby's breathing may become noisy, sounding rattly or wheezy. They may seem to be making more effort to breathe. As their breathing becomes more difficult they may not manage to take the usual amount of milk by breast or bottle. You may notice fewer wet nappies than usual. Because young children often swallow mucous they may vomit after feeding. They may seem irritable and out of sorts.

What can I do to help my child?

Offer feeds little and often. If your child has a fever or is irritable you can give paracetamol. If your child is over 6 months of age and still has a fever after paracetamol has been given you may also give ibuprofen.

If your child is already taking medicine or using inhalers you should continue to use them. If you are struggling to get the child to take them ask your doctor for advice.

Make sure your child is not exposed to tobacco smoke or vaping. Passive smoking can seriously damage your child's health and makes breathing problems like bronchiolitis worse. Even if someone smokes or vapes outside the house the residue will remain on their clothing and may affect your child.

How long does bronchiolitis last?

Most babies and children with bronchiolitis get better over the course of two weeks. They can go back to nursery or day care as soon as they are feeding normally and are happy and active.

When do I need help?

There is usually no need to see your doctor if your child is recovering well, but if you are worried about their progress contact NHS direct or speak to your doctor.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day. If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:
Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>
www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department (A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11 6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743