

Bronchiolitis in Babies under 2 years

Information for parents/carers

How is your child?

Not too unwell

Your baby does not have any of the features mentioned below and you feel that you can manage to care for him/her

Not all babies with bronchiolitis need to see a doctor. Watch your baby for any of the changes listed on this sheet and contact someone if you become concerned.

Your baby does not have any of the features mentioned below but you are worried about your baby or how to care for him/her

Contact your GP to make an appointment or health services as detailed below.

Fairly unwell

If your baby

- is not feeding as much as normal
- is not passing water (peeing) much
- is vomiting
- is getting worse
- has fast breathing
- has a high fever

Immediately contact your GP to make an appointment for your child to be seen that day. If you are unable to contact your GP go to a Walk-in Centre/ Urgent Care Centre, contact the Out of Hours Service or NHS Direct (0845 4647)

Very unwell

If your baby

- is difficult to wake
- has blue lips
- is not feeding at all
- is very irritable or has an unusual cry
- is floppy
- has very fast or difficult breathing
- has long gaps between breaths

Ring 999-you need help immediately

What is Bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis usually affect babies under age 1 only ever children aged under 2. It is an infectious disease when the tiniest airways in your baby's lungs become swollen. This can make it more difficult for your baby to breathe. It is caused by a virus and is most common in winter months. It usually only causes mild "cold-like" symptoms and most babies get better on their own. Some babies, especially very young ones, can have difficulty with breathing and feeding and may need to go to hospital.

What are the symptoms?

- Runny nose and sometimes a temperature and a cough.
- Cough that may become worse after a few days.
- Breathing may be faster than normal and it may become noisy.
- Having to work harder to breathe.
- Sometimes very young babies may have brief pauses in their breathing.
- As breathing becomes more difficult, your baby may not be able to take the usual amount of milk by breast or bottle.
- You may notice fewer wet nappies than usual.
- Your baby may vomit after feeding and become irritable.

How can I look after my baby at home?

- Offer small amounts of milk more often.
- If your baby has a fever, you can use paracetamol in the recommended doses – read the bottle for the doses
- If your baby is already taking medicines or inhalers, you should carry on using them. If you find it difficult to use them, ask your doctor for advice.
- Antibiotics won't help as Bronchiolitis is caused by a virus.
- It is important that your baby is not exposed to tobacco smoke. Passive smoking can seriously damage your baby's health. It makes breathing problems like bronchiolitis worse.

How long does Bronchiolitis last?

- Most babies with bronchiolitis get better within about two weeks. They may still have a cough for few more weeks.
- Your baby can go back to nursery or day care as soon as he or she is feeding normally and does not have difficulty in breathing.
- There is no need to see your doctor if your baby is recovering well.
- If you are worried about your baby's progress, contact your doctor or NHS Direct.

This leaflet can be provided in other formats and in other languages by telephoning 0800 013 0500