

Bronchiolitis is an illness that occurs when a virus infects the smallest airways in your baby's lungs causing them to become swollen and inflamed. This can make it more difficult for your baby to breathe. It is common in the winter months and affects babies under 1 year of age. Most babies and children get better on their own, but some babies, especially very young ones, can develop severe symptoms and may need to be cared for in hospital.

What are the symptoms?

- Your baby will usually have a runny nose and a cough. They may also have a fever.
- Your baby's breathing may be faster and harder than normal and may be noisy.
- Sometimes, in very young babies, bronchiolitis may cause pauses in the breathing. If this occurs, your baby needs urgent help (see the red box overleaf).
- As breathing becomes difficult, your baby may not be able to take the usual amount of milk by breast or bottle and you may notice fewer wet nappies than usual.
- Your baby may vomit after feeding and become irritable.

How can I help my baby?

- If your baby is not feeding as normal offer feeds little and often.
- If your baby has a fever and appears uncomfortable, you can give them paracetamol in the recommended doses.

- If your baby is already taking medicines or inhalers, they should carry on using these.
- If you find it difficult to get your baby to take medication, ask your doctor for advice.
- Bronchiolitis is caused by a virus so antibiotics won't help.
- Make sure your baby is not exposed to tobacco smoke. Passive smoking can seriously damage your child's health. Smoke remains on your clothes even if you smoke outside.

How long does bronchiolitis last?

- Most babies with bronchiolitis get better within 1 - 2 weeks, although the cough may last for longer than this.
- Your baby can go back to nursery or day care as soon as they are well enough (feeding normally with no difficulty in breathing).
- There is usually no need to see a doctor if your baby is recovering well, but if you are worried about their progress, contact 111 or talk to their doctor.

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Bronchiolitis

Children's Emergency Department

If your baby

- Has blue lips or tongue
- Is very irritable or becomes floppy or unresponsive
- Is breathing much faster or harder than normal or you notice them using their tummy muscles to breathe
- Has long pauses in their breathing or has an irregular breathing pattern.

Your baby needs urgent help. Telephone 999 for an ambulance or go straight to your nearest Emergency Department.

If your baby

- Is not feeding from the bottle or breast as much as normal
- Is passing less urine or has fewer wet nappies than usual
- Is vomiting and not keeping down feeds
- Has a temperature above 38.5°C.
- Gets worse or you are worried.

You need to see or speak to a nurse or doctor today. Please ring your baby's GP surgery or call NHS 111.

If your baby

- Does not have any of the red or amber features.

Using the advice overleaf, you can provide the care your baby needs at home

Useful Numbers

Practice Plus

(Brighton walk-in centre / GP service)
0333 321 0946 - Open 8am till 8pm -
7 days a week including bank holidays
www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk/

For out of hours GP service or advice ring
NHS 111

Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

01273 696955 Ext. 2593
Children's Emergency Department

Please be aware that staff in the Children's Emergency Department will not be able to give you medical advice over the telephone.