

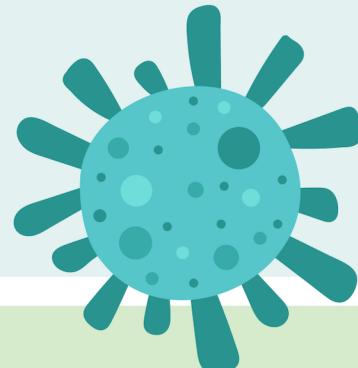
Colds are very common in healthy children and on average, preschool children get at least **six colds per year**. It is common for healthy children to have up to 12 viral illnesses per year in the first few years of life.

It is also common for children to get sick from one virus shortly after getting better from a different one, so it can seem they are sick all the time. As children get older, the frequency of catching viral illnesses usually reduces.

## SYMPTOMS OF A VIRAL ILLNESS

If your child has a virus, they may show a variety of symptoms, including:

- a blocked or runny nose
- red, watery eyes
- a sore throat
- fever
- rashes that turn white (blanch) for a second or so after you push on them with a finger (you could also press the side of a clear drinking glass over the rash and watch to see if it blanches)
- coughing or sneezing
- vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- wanting to sleep more (lethargy)
- not wanting to eat
- feeling generally unwell.



## MANAGING SYMPTOMS AT HOME

Viruses cannot be treated with antibiotics. The best treatment is rest at home to allow your child's immune system to fight the virus.

- Give your child small amounts to drink frequently when awake, such as a mouthful of water every 15 minutes or so. This helps to ease a sore throat by keeping it moist, and replaces the fluid lost due to having a fever, vomiting or diarrhoea. Water is best, but rehydrating ice blocks are also a good way of providing fluids to your child..
- Do not be concerned if your child does not eat for a few days. When they feel better they will start eating again.
- Allow your child to rest.
- Use saline nasal (nose) drops to help clear a blocked nose in babies. A baby with a clear nose will find it easier to feed.
- Give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen for pain, or if your child is miserable, irritable or lethargic. Carefully check the label for the correct dose and make sure you are not already giving your child any other products containing paracetamol or ibuprofen (such as some cough medicines and cold-and-flu preparations).
- Your child does not need paracetamol or ibuprofen just to reduce a fever. A fever helps the body get better naturally.

# VIRAL ILLNESS ADVICE

## WHEN TO CALL THE MEDICAL CENTRE

If your child is not improving after 48 hours, or is getting worse, call reception on 078895126 . Also call us if your child has any of the following:

- pain that does not improve with paracetamol or ibuprofen
- persistent vomiting and diarrhoea
- a high fever that is not improving after 48 hours
- refusal to drink or have an ice block for six hours
- a rash or spot that does not blanch when you push on it
- less than half the usual number of wet nappies
- they are giving you concern for any other reason
- Poor feeding or fever in an infant aged three months or younger



## WHEN TO SEEK IMMEDIATE CARE

Call us, or go to urgent care/ED/Call 111 immediately if your child has any of the following:

- is very pale or hard to wake
- has trouble breathing
- has a rash and gets a headache, stiff neck or back pain
- is unwell with a fever and a skin rash (small bright red spots or purple spots or unexplained bruises) that does not turn to skin-colour (blanch) when you press on it
- Poor feeding or fever in an infant aged one month or younger

## STOP THE SPREAD

Good hygiene reduces the chance of getting viruses or passing them onto others.

Good hygiene includes:

- regularly washing hands thoroughly
- not sharing cups or cutlery
- encouraging children to cough or sneeze into their elbow
- using tissues instead of hankies – teach your child to throw tissues into the bin as soon as they have used them and to wash their hands afterwards.