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| |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Bronchiolitis: Signs to watch out for in young children** | | It's important to be aware of common respiratory illnesses that can affect young children – especially during the winter months. In this email, I want to discuss bronchiolitis, a condition that can cause breathing difficulties in infants and toddlers.  **What is Bronchiolitis?**  Bronchiolitis is a viral infection that affects the small airways in the lungs, primarily in children under the age of two. It is mostly caused by the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) but can also be caused by other viruses such as rhinovirus and influenza (flu). To protect newborns from RSV, it is important for pregnant women and birthing people to receive the RSV vaccine at 28 weeks, which helps shield babies during the first six months of life.  **When to seek medical help**  Bronchiolitis can be a concerning illness for parents, but with the right care and support, most children recover fully within a week or two. It’s important to remember that antibiotics don’t work on a viral illness like bronchiolitis. By staying informed about the symptoms of bronchiolitis and knowing when to seek medical help, you can help ensure your child stays healthy and happy this winter season. | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Visit A&E:** | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | The emergency departments are for life-threatening symptoms. Call 999 or go to Accident and Emergency when your child has:   * Breathing very fast or breathing that stops or pauses * Makes a [**grunting**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/233B1E0B1A369E74CA3B24AE5A5A3ABB65A7CD18B82F45896834AD03AFCCBE09/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35) noise every time they breathe out * A harsh noise as they breathe in ([**stridor**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/4123FE26D7C71939A23E64C333786DEEFE87CDCB779E78C0E74ADD8BE9BB8C7A/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35)) present all of the time (even when they are not upset) * Becomes pale, blue, mottled and/or unusually cold to touch * Difficult to wake up, very sleepy or confused * Weak, high-pitched, continuous cry or can’t be settled * Has a fit (seizure) * Is under 3 months old with temperature more than 38°C or under 36°C (unless fever in the 48 hours following vaccinations and no other red or amber features) * Has a rash that does not go away with pressure (the ‘[**Glass Test**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/77DF7DC90B93B41A743D1DAB1B0B8362AD33D37B29FC21F4FFFDB7E48F72D31D/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35)’) | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Call 111:** | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | If symptoms get worse, then it’s time to ask for help. Call 111 as your first point of contact, if your child is:   * Working hard to breathe, [**drawing in of the muscles below the rib**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/AE418BF2CA020B66FA7C78D484F595744EE9160813AA71746833BC07630F997E/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35)[**s**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/5D1CB69763616F6BEB4C7DCA720DCCD3DB2560D10CE918B0321B77DAD8196D42/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35) * A harsh noise as they breathe in ([**stridor**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/0B82B00EA1C4D846B72758F0A60FA8CFA774A999BE4EE02D1D72E49D9AB6B94F/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35)) only when upset * Dry skin, lips or tongue * Not had a wee or wet nappy in last 8 hours * Poor feeding in babies (less than half of their usual amount) * Irritable (Unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or hugs even after their fever has come down) * Is 3-6 months old with temperature 39oC or above (unless fever in the 48 hours following vaccinations and no other red or amber features) * Temperature of 38oC or above for more than 5 days or shivering with fever (rigors) * Temperature less than 36°C in those over 3 months * Getting worse and I am still worried | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Treat children and home** | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Most cases of bronchiolitis can be treated at home. If your child has none of the above symptoms, watch them closely for any change and look out for any red or amber symptoms  [**Additional advice is also available for families for help cope with crying in otherwise well babies**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/2864E65F92B56198C32D13A72E9684E44B2164C7EBEBCCBCF1374EA22238F68B/269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3/LE35).  If your child has a long term condition or disability and you are worried please contact your regular team or follow any plans that they have given you. | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Treatment and management**  Treatment for bronchiolitis is focused on relieving symptoms and supporting your child's breathing. This may include:   * Keeping your child well-hydrated with fluids such as breast milk, formula, or water (for older infants) * Using a cool mist humidifier to help ease congestion. * Elevating your child's head while sleeping to make breathing easier. * Monitoring your child closely for any signs of worsening symptoms   **Prevention**  You can help reduce your child's risk of infection by washing your hands regularly, avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and keeping your child away from tobacco smoke.  If you have any questions or concerns about bronchiolitis or your child's respiratory health, please don't hesitate to reach out to your healthcare provider. | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Stay well,  **Dr Sooraj Natarajan** GP and Children and Young People’s Clinical Lead NHS Mid and South Essex | | | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Looking for more expert advice? Visit the**[**Children’s Health Matters**](https://news.comms.midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/NLI/ViewHtmlEmail.aspx?a=CD745151EA5F6492591278C347D0AB73&b=269966A9AEB09AB00847EB46E17D41C3)**hub for a wide range of resources and tips to support your child’s wellbeing. Stay informed and keep your family healthy!** | | | |

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