

Coughs & colds



Children often catch coughs, colds and sneezes as their immune systems are learning to deal with common illnesses. It's normal for a child to have eight or more colds a year. If your child is coughing or sneezing, has a mild fever and seems generally unwell, it's likely they have a cold and what they really need is plenty of fluids and some rest.



Antibiotics don't work on colds. Antibiotics only work on bacterial infections but colds are caused by viruses. These viruses can be spread through droplets from coughs and sneezes or transferred on a person's fingers. The main symptoms of winter viruses are coughing, sneezing, blocked nose, sore throat, headache and a slight temperature. If these are the only symptoms you have, it's unlikely that your GP will be able to do anything - in most cases, antibiotics (which are used to treat bacterial infections) aren't necessary.

Treating colds

You may want to visit your local pharmacy, where you can get advice on how to manage their symptoms and buy over-the-counter medicine. Some painkillers, such as children's paracetamol liquid can help with the symptoms of a cold. Aspirin shouldn't be given to children under 16 years of age.



Don't pass it on

1. **CATCH IT** Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.
2. **BIN IT** Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.
3. **KILL IT** Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



Coughs

Children often cough when they have a cold because of mucus trickling down the back of the throat. If your child is feeding, drinking, eating and breathing normally and there's no wheezing, a cough isn't usually anything to worry about.

If a cough continues for a long time, especially if it's worse at night or is brought on by your child running about, it could be a sign of asthma. Some children with asthma also have a wheeze or breathlessness. If your child has any of these symptoms take them to the GP. Although it's upsetting to hear your child cough, coughing helps clear away phlegm from the chest or mucus from the back of the throat. If your child is over the age of one, try a warm drink of lemon and honey. Never give cough medicines to children under the age of six.



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care

What to do next...



Choose care at home if...

- Your child has a cough or cold
- Most colds get better in five to seven days
- Your GP is unlikely to be able to help
- Antibiotics won't help as they don't work on viruses
- Your child will need rest and plenty to drink
- Your child can return to school or nursery as soon as they are well enough
- If in doubt, you can call your GP or the NHS 111 service for advice



Choose your Pharmacy or GP if...

- You need some over-the-counter remedies for your child's symptoms - your pharmacist can help with this
- Your child has a bad cough that won't go away – see your GP. If your child also has a high temperature and is breathless, they may have a chest infection.
- Your child seems to be having trouble breathing contact your GP, even if it's the middle of the night.
- Your child develops a rash – call your GP, even if it's the middle of the night
- Your child develops neck pain/stiffness – call your GP, even if it's the middle of the night
- There are any changes in your child's level of alertness (drowsy, irritable etc) - call your GP, even if it's the middle of the night
- You are still concerned about symptoms after 1 week – contact your GP



Call 999 A&E if...

- Your child has chest pain
- Your child has severe difficulty breathing or they are using their tummy or neck muscles to breathe



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Choose the right care