

Bronchiolitis

Advice and Information for Parents
and Carers going home from the
Emergency Department



What is Bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a viral infection, usually caused by the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). When a baby catches the virus, they may have a runny nose, temperature and cough. Bronchiolitis causes swelling in the tiniest airways in the lungs. This makes it harder for your baby to breathe and this can mean they have difficulty feeding.

Most children will have caught RSV by the time they are two. Most will have a 'cold' like illness and get better on their own. It is much more common during the winter season and easily spread, so is very difficult to prevent.

How can I help my baby?

- If they are finding it hard to feed, they will find it easier to take smaller amounts more frequently.
- As it is a viral infection, antibiotics do not help the infection.
- If your baby normally takes any medications, carry on giving them.
- Do not expose your baby to tobacco smoke, passive smoking makes breathing problems worse.
- If your baby has a temperature, you can give them paracetamol (eg Calpol). Be careful to follow the instructions on the bottle.

When will my baby get better?

- Most babies start to improve after 4 days and are usually better by two weeks.
- The cough can last for several weeks.
- Most babies will only get bronchiolitis once but sometimes, they can get it again.
- Bronchiolitis does not usually cause any long-term problems.
- If your baby is getting better, then you do not need to see your doctor.

When should I seek further medical attention?

- If your baby is only taking half their normal feeds over several feeds.
- If your baby has not wet a nappy for 12 hours
- If your baby is very tired or not waking as normal.
- If your baby has a temperature of 38°C or above.
- If your baby is working hard to breath.

Ring 111 for over the phone advice.

Dial 999 if:

There are long pauses in your baby's breathing;

or

Their lips and tongue are turning blue;

or

**Your baby is having lots of difficulty breathing
and is pale or sweaty**

