



# Bronchiolitis

Bronchiolitis is a viral infection affecting the small airways of the lungs and is usually caused by RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus). It usually affects children under one year and is most common in those less than six months old during the winter months.

Most children are not seriously unwell and make a complete recovery. However, some children are more severely affected and require hospitalisation. Children at increased risk of a more severe illness include those who were born prematurely or who have other lung or heart conditions.

## What are the symptoms?

| <b>Initially:</b> | <b>As the illness develops:</b>    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Runny nose        | Fast breathing                     |
| Cough             | Poor feeding due to breathlessness |
| Blocked nose      | Noisy breathing (wheeze)           |

## How is it treated?

Medicines such as antibiotics do not usually help with bronchiolitis. Treatment is supportive and includes helping infants with their feeding and breathing.



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## Can it spread to others?

The virus is spread by droplets in the air during the first few days of the illness. This may cause similar symptoms in other young babies or cold symptoms and wheeze in older children and adults.

## Care at home?

- Do **not** smoke around your child as we know this can make the illness worse.
- Raising the head of the cot slightly can assist babies breathing.
- Feed the child little and often to prevent tiring due to being unable to breath and dehydration.

## Who should see their General Practitioner (GP) or seek hospital help?

- Unsure and need advice.
- Feeding less than half of normal.
- Very fast or irregular breathing.
- Worsening cough.
- Very drowsy and sleepy.
- If your baby turns blue or becomes pale and sweaty call 999.

## Which Children Need Admission to Hospital?

Hospitalisation is necessary in about 3 in 100 babies with bronchiolitis. Usually this is because their breathing or feeding



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has worsened to the point that they require oxygen and help with feeding in the form of a feeding tube or an intravenous drip.

## How long will it last?

Symptoms are usually worst during day three or four of the illness. In total bronchiolitis lasts about 10 – 14 days but an irritating cough may continue for several weeks more.

## Where can I Find more Information?

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Bronchiolitis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>



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**Please retain this leaflet for future reference.**

**For further advice or information you can telephone your local Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**

## **Chippenham Community Hospital**

Rowden Hill

Chippenham

SN15 2AJ

Tel: 01249 456 403/4

Open: 07:00am to 23:00pm; Seven days a week

## **Trowbridge Community Hospital**

Adcroft Street

Trowbridge

BA14 8PH

Tel: 01225 711 329

Open: 07:00am to 23:00pm; Seven days a week

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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