

## When to get help URGENTLY

Your baby develops a cough

Your baby's colour is very pale or blue

Your baby's chest sucks in (indraws) when breathing and they are working hard to breathe

Your baby has a high fever (feels hot)

Not feeding well - sleepy, not interested, taking much less feed than usual

## Emergency Contact Numbers

### Your family doctor

If you have any concerns about your baby which are not emergencies contact your GP

Have essential phone numbers to hand for quick and easy access when you take your baby home

### Local Accident and Emergency Department

Children's Emergency Department  
Starship Hospital  
(09) 207-8900

**In an emergency  
Phone for an ambulance  
Dial 111**



# Bronchiolitis

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## What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a chest infection caused by a virus. It usually affects babies/toddlers under two. It is more common in winter.

The virus affects the small airways (breathing tubes) blocking them with mucus and making it difficult for the baby to breathe.

It is usually a mild disease, but some babies will require treatment in hospital.

## Signs of Bronchiolitis

Usually starts with a cough and runny nose

After 2 - 3 days their breathing may change to fast, noisy breathing and wheezing may occur.

At this time they may have trouble  
Feeding  
Drinking  
Sleeping

They may be fretful and cry a lot

They may have a fever - high temperature

## How Can It be Treated?

- Bronchiolitis is a virus and therefore cannot be treated with antibiotics
- Paracetamol can be given to help reduce a fever and/or to keep your baby comfortable
- They are usually very tired and find it difficult to feed. Try offering small, more frequent feeds/drinks
- Let them rest as much as possible
- Your baby may need saline (salt water) nose drops to help clear any mucus blocking their nose. Nursing staff will show you how to do this properly
- Babies normally breathe through their nose only and therefore if it becomes blocked they find it difficult to breathe properly
- A few babies require oxygen and fluid intake support and will need to come into hospital.

## Is Bronchiolitis Infectious?

It spreads very quickly. Keep your baby away from other babies during the first week of the illness (eg your baby/child should not attend Day Care).

The virus is spread from person to person by coughing and by contact with secretions from the nose.

Hand washing is really important in preventing spread of the infection.

## How Long Will It Last?

The wheezing and difficulty lasts for several days and then the baby gradually improves.

The cough usually lasts 10 - 14 days but may last as long as a month.

So after discharge, do not worry if the cough continues for that period of time. But consult your GP if your baby becomes unwell again.

