

When should I bring my baby to hospital?

If your baby

- Has blue lips or tongue
- Is very irritable or becomes floppy or unresponsive
- Is breathing much faster or harder than normal or you notice them using their tummy muscles to breathe
- Has long pauses in their breathing or has an irregular breathing pattern.

Your baby needs urgent help. Telephone 999 for an ambulance or go straight to your nearest Emergency Department.

When will my baby be better?

Most babies with bronchiolitis get better within 1 - 2 weeks, although the cough is likely to last for longer than this.

Your baby can go back to nursery or day care as soon as they are well enough (feeding normally with no difficulty in breathing).

There is usually no need to see a doctor if your baby is recovering well, but if you are worried about their progress, contact 111 or talk to their GP.

Useful Numbers

Practice Plus

(Brighton walk-in centre / GP service)

0300 130 3333

Open 8am till 8pm - 7 days a week including bank holidays

www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk

For Out of Hours GP Service ring NHS 111

Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

01273 696955 Ext. 2593

Children's Emergency Department

Please be aware that CED staff will not be able to give you medical advice for your baby over the phone but can direct you to an appropriate service to assist with your enquiry.

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Bronchiolitis

Children's Emergency Department

My baby has bronchiolitis

Bronchiolitis is an illness that occurs when a virus infects the smallest airways in your baby's lungs causing them to become swollen and inflamed. This can make it more difficult for your baby to breathe.

Bronchiolitis is common in the winter months and affects babies under 1 year of age.

Most babies get better on their own, but some, especially very young infants, can develop severe symptoms and may need to be cared for in hospital.

Unfortunately there are no proven medications specifically for bronchiolitis, so whether your baby is at home or in hospital, treatment focusses on supporting your baby with their symptoms until they get better.

What are the symptoms?

Because bronchiolitis is a type of viral infection, your baby may develop symptoms typical of infections, such as fever and feeling unwell.

In addition,

- Your baby will usually have a runny nose and a cough.
- Your baby's breathing may be faster and harder than normal and may be noisy.

- Sometimes, in very young babies, bronchiolitis may cause pauses in the breathing. If this occurs, your baby needs urgent help (see the red box overleaf).
- As breathing becomes difficult, your baby may not be able to take the usual amount of milk by breast or bottle and you may notice fewer wet nappies than usual.
- Your baby may vomit after feeding and become irritable.

How can I help my baby?

Supporting your baby's symptoms at home:

- If your baby is not feeding as normal, offer smaller feeds more often.
- If your baby has a fever and appears uncomfortable, you can give them paracetamol or ibuprofen. Always follow the manufacturers' instructions for the correct dose.
- If your baby is already taking medicines or inhalers, they should carry on using these.
- Make sure your baby is not exposed to tobacco smoke. Passive smoking can seriously damage your child's health. Smoke remains on your clothes even if you smoke outside.

Antibiotics are not usually used in bronchiolitis, as they are ineffective against the viruses that cause it.

When should I seek further help for my baby?

If your baby

- Is not feeding from the bottle or breast as much as normal
- Is passing less urine or has fewer wet nappies than usual
- Is vomiting and not keeping down feeds
- Has a temperature above 38.5°C.
- Gets worse or you are worried.

You need to see or speak to a nurse or doctor today. Please ring your baby's GP surgery or call NHS 111.