

Most of the time you can treat minor illnesses at home



If your child is poorly

The following advice helps you treat your child at home when they have a common childhood illness like a cough, a cold or sickness and diarrhoea.

Also included is some advice about asthma.

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It is a good idea to have a medicine cabinet that is well out of reach to children. You could keep a thermometer, plasters, creams for nappy rash and painkillers for children such as paracetamol or ibuprofen in your cabinet.

Always make sure you use the right strength of medicine for the age of your child and sugar-free options where you can. Read the instructions carefully and check use by dates.

Where can I get more help?

You know your child better than anyone else but if you are still worried **click here** for more details of where you can get more help.

If you need more information you can also visit www.nhs.uk

You can also use this website to find your nearest GP practice, pharmacy or hospital.

Asthma ▶

Colds, coughs and croup ▶

Constipation ▶

Ear infections ▶

Fever ▶

Sore throats ▶

Upset tummy ▶

More help ▶

Asthma

Asthma is a common lung condition that causes occasional breathing difficulties and often starts in childhood.

There's currently no cure, but there are simple treatments that can help keep the symptoms under control so it doesn't have a big impact on your child's life.

The main symptoms of asthma are:

- **wheezing (a whistling sound when breathing)**
- **breathlessness**
- **a tight chest**
- **coughing (especially at night)**

The symptoms can sometimes get temporarily worse. This is known as an asthma attack.

If you think your child has asthma please contact your GP practice. Several conditions can cause similar symptoms, so it's important to get a medical diagnosis and correct treatment. Your GP will usually be able to diagnose asthma by asking about symptoms and carrying out some simple tests.

What can cause asthma?

Asthma is caused by swelling (inflammation) of the breathing tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs. This makes the tubes highly sensitive so they temporarily narrow. It may occur randomly or after exposure to a trigger.

Common asthma triggers include:

- **allergies – to house dust mites, animal fur or pollen**
- **cigarette smoke, pollution and cold air**
- **infections such as colds or flu**

How to treat asthma

Asthma is usually treated by using an inhaler, a small device that lets your child breathe in medicines. It's important to always use a plastic device called a spacer with the inhaler. You can ask your GP for a spacer if your child does not have one.

The main types of inhalers are:

- **preventer inhalers which should be used every day. To make sure your child uses it daily you could suggest they use it before they clean their teeth. It's really important your child uses their inhaler as it will help prevent asthma attacks.**
- **reliever inhalers which can be used to quickly relieve asthma symptoms for a short time. If your child is using a reliever more than three times a week then their asthma is not well controlled so please make an appointment to see your GP or asthma nurse.**

How long does it last?

Asthma is a long-term condition for many. In children, it sometimes disappears or improves during the teenage years, but it can come back later in life. The symptoms can usually be controlled with treatment and most people live normal, active lives.

Although asthma can usually be kept under control, it's still a serious condition that can cause a number of problems. This is why it's so important to follow your child's treatment plan and not ignore their symptoms if they're getting worse.

Badly controlled asthma can cause problems such as:

- **feeling tired all the time**
- **underperformance at or absence from school**
- **lung infections (pneumonia)**
- **delays in growth or puberty**

There's also a risk of severe asthma attacks which can be life-threatening.

If your child has an asthma attack and their reliever is not working, please call 999.

Remember, sadly, asthma still KILLS. Approximately 13 children die each year in the UK, most of these deaths could be avoided.