

Cough and cold

Key messages

- Coughing is the body's natural way of clearing infections.
- Unfortunately, coughs and colds can continue for weeks before they get better. In addition, over the winter, children are likely to get one viral infection after another, which can make you think that they are never well. Things will get better in the summer months!
- Most of these are likely to be caused by a virus, which means that antibiotics are of no benefit and may actually result in side effects such as rash, vomiting or a runny tummy. It may also mean that they might work less well the next time your child needs antibiotics (antibiotic resistance).
- Having green snot, a wheeze or a noisy chest does not mean that your child has an infection requiring antibiotics.

What should you do?

- To make your child more comfortable, you may want to give them paracetamol (calpol) and/or ibuprofen. Read the instructions on the bottle.
- Babies may not feed as well as normal – try smaller feeds but more frequently.
- Babies are often more unsettled when they have a cough/cold, especially at night. You could try saline drops for comfort.

When should you worry?

RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Has blue lips
- Is unresponsive or extremely drowsy
- Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas)
- Has an irregular breathing pattern

You need urgent help go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999

AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Has decreased feeding (less than half of normal feeds)
- Is passing significantly less urine than normal
- Is not keeping down fluids
- Has a temperature of above 38°C
- Has breathing that is becoming more laboured
- Seems to be getting worse or if you are worried

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today
Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111

GREEN

If none of the features in the red or amber boxes above are present.

Self Care - You can look after your child at home

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with a smart phone
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