

CARING FOR YOUR CHILD WITH RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Know the Symptoms

Most infants and children with respiratory illness, including colds, influenza, RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), and COVID-19 can be cared for at home **without prescription medications**.



Children with respiratory viruses may experience the following symptoms:

- cough
- runny nose
- sneezing
- fever
- wheeze

Your child might also experience:

- red, watery eyes
- sore throat
- vomiting or diarrhea
- rash (that turns white, or blanches, when you push on it)
- decreased energy

Symptoms in most children start to improve in 7 to 10 days, though cough can last for a few weeks.

Contact a doctor or visit the SickKids Virtual Urgent Care website if your child:

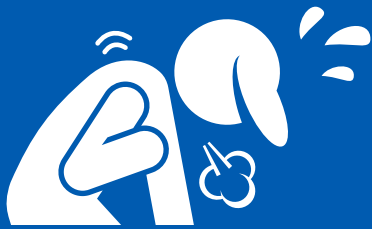
- Has a fever that lasts 72 hours or longer*
- Has a fever that goes away for a day or two and then returns
- Has an earache that lasts 48 hours or more
- Is not eating or drinking
- If you feel your child needs to be seen, you can always reach out for help.

Call 911 or visit the nearest Emergency Department if:

- You are concerned that your child is seriously ill
- Your child is showing signs of respiratory distress or breathing quickly
- Your child is at risk of being dehydrated or showing signs of dehydration
- Your child is excessively sleepy, lethargic, or not responding normally

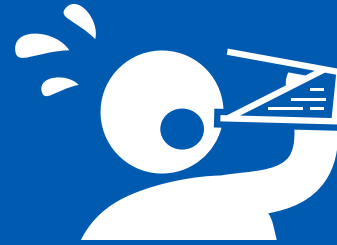
***urgent medical attention is recommended for infants less than 3 months with fever!**

Know the Signs of Respiratory Distress



- Tachypnea (breathing too quickly)
- Retractions of the chest or neck
- Flaring of the nostrils
- Grunting
- Colour change (appearing pale or blue)
- Wheezing or crackles
- Lower oxygen saturations

Know the Signs of Dehydration



- Dry or sunken eyes
- Sunken soft spot on top of the head (fontanelle) in babies
- Crying without tears
- Dry sticky mouth or cracked dry lips
- Less urine than usual, no urine for 8-12 hours, or dark urine
- Decreased energy

Tips for managing respiratory illnesses:

- Saline nose drops and suction can help clear congestion and make it easier for your baby or young child to breathe and feed
- Maintaining a partly sitting or upright position makes it easier to breathe
- Babies should keep breastfeeding or drinking formula as usual. You may need to offer smaller feedings more often.
- Encourage older children to drink. You can offer water, sports drinks, or apple juice mixed with water. Soup and freezies are good options too! (Oral Rehydration Solutions are recommended if your child is having diarrhea).
- Do not give cough medicines to children younger than six years old
- A teaspoon of honey can help with cough for children older than one



What is a Fever?

Normal body temperature depends on the method of measurement. A temperature greater than 38°C (100.3°F) is considered a fever when measured in the rectum or ear, and a temperature greater than 37.6°C (99.6°F) is considered a fever when measured in the mouth or under the arm. In healthy kids, not all fevers need to be treated but treating a high fever can make a child feel more comfortable! If unsure, contact your doctor, or the SickKids Virtual Urgent Care website, or dial 911 if your child is seriously ill.