



Bronchiolitis is a very common infection that causes the tiniest airways in your child's lungs to become swollen, which can make it harder for them to breathe. It is caused by viral infections often by a virus called RSV and is more common over the winter months. It mostly affects young children under 2 years of age.

Most children do not need any treatment and get better on their own. Some children, especially very young babies, may need to go to hospital due to the need for extra help with their breathing or feeding. The two most common reasons for children to need to stay in hospital are if they need extra oxygen or they are taking less than half of their normal feeds.

If your child has any of the following:

- Breathing very fast or breathing that stops or pauses
- Working hard to breathe, drawing in of the muscles below the rib, unable to talk or noisy breathing (grunting)
- A harsh breath noise as they breathe in (stridor) present all of the time (even when they are not upset)
- Becomes pale, blue, mottled and/or unusually cold to touch
- Difficult to wake up, very sleepy or confused
- Weak, high-pitched, continuous cry or extremely agitated
- Has a fit (seizure)
- A temperature less than 36°C or temperature 38°C or more if baby is less than 3 months
- Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure and seems unwell (see the 'Glass Test')



You need urgent help.

Go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999

If your child has any of the following:

- Breathing a bit faster than normal or working a bit harder to breathe
- Noisy breathing (stridor) only when upset
- Dry skin, lips, tongue or looking pale
- Not had a wee or wet nappy in last 12 hours
- Sleepy or not responding normally
- Crying and unsettled
- Poor feeding (babies) or not drinking (children)
- A temperature 39°C or above in babies 3-6 months
- Temperature of 38°C or above for more than 5 days or shivering with fever (rigors)
- Getting worse or you are worried about them



You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111

If your child has none of the above:

Watch them closely for any change and look out for any red or amber symptoms



Self care

Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, call NHS 111 – dial 111

**What can you do?**

Most babies and children can be safely cared for at home. If your baby / child is struggling with their feeding, try smaller, more frequent feeds.

A mild fever is common in the first few days. Give paracetamol to lower your child's temperature. Paracetamol will also help to soothe any sore throat and make your child feel more comfortable.

Bronchiolitis can get worse before it starts to get better. Babies and children are often most poorly on day 5 of the illness then gradually start to get better. Keep a close eye on your baby's breathing and feeding. If you have any new concerns, please re-visit our red/amber/green table to see if your child needs to see a healthcare professional or not, and to find out where and when is best for your child to be seen.

Wash your hands with soap and water regularly

Avoid exposure to tobacco smoke which makes their breathing worse

Antibiotics aren't needed as bronchiolitis is caused by a virus

How long does bronchiolitis last?

Babies are usually unwell for 5 to 10 days. Most will get better within two weeks. Babies may still have a cough for up to 4 weeks afterwards and this is completely normal

Your child can go back to nursery as soon as you feel they are well enough. Bronchiolitis does not normally cause long term problems for your child