



Baby health and illness eBook



# Baby Health and Illness

There are few things more confronting than when your little one falls ill. It's often hard to know how to treat them, or when to call a doctor.

This eBook looks at everything from the signs and symptoms of the most common childhood illnesses, through to the differences between reflux and colic and ways you can help boost your little one's immune system.

An experienced family doctor has answered some of your most frequently asked questions when bub is sick and we've broken down the key differences in common medications for your little one along with a guideline on when to use them.

We've included some great tips in encouraging good hygiene for the whole family and some terrific suggestions about foods you can feed your little one to help boost their immune system, or treat them when they're sick.

*Disclaimer: The information in this eBook should not be used as an alternative to professional care. If you have a particular problem, see a doctor or ring the Parent Helpline.*





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# Common illnesses: description, symptoms, recommended treatments

Over the next few years your little one is likely to suffer through at least one or two of the most common childhood illnesses. We've provided a detailed chart outlining the symptoms and treatments available. However, always remember if you are concerned or have further questions, make sure you phone your healthcare provider.

Illness	Symptom	Treatment
<p><b>Common cold</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upper respiratory Tract Infection</li> <li>Sneezing coughing</li> <li>Direct contact</li> <li>Contagious until symptoms clear</li> </ul>	<p>Any or all of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blocked or runny nose</li> <li>Sneezing</li> <li>Sore throat</li> <li>Cough</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Fever</li> </ul>	<p>Treat the symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plenty of fluids</li> <li>Give Paracetamol/Ibuprofen.</li> <li>Nasal spray or drops. Ask your pharmacist for advice.</li> </ul> <p>Visit your doctor if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing high fever</li> <li>Breathing difficulties</li> <li>Intense headache</li> <li>Stiff neck</li> <li>Lethargic</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gastroenteritis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This can be a viral or bacterial infection.</li> <li>Can be a serious disease in young babies due to dehydration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vomiting and diarrhoea</li> <li>Abdominal pain and cramps</li> <li>Fever</li> <li>Dehydration can result</li> <li>May have blood in the stool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to breastfeed and offer extra water or electrolyte solution</li> <li>Replace formula with water or electrolyte solution until vomiting stops.</li> </ul> <p>Seek medical attention if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Symptoms persist for more than 24 hours</li> <li>You suspect dehydration</li> <li>You are concerned in any way</li> <li>Be vigilant with hand washing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Roseola</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A viral infection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High fever for about 3 days</li> <li>Loss of appetite</li> <li>Swollen lymph glands in the neck</li> <li>Followed by a rash (pink/red spots).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your doctor for confirmation of the rash.</li> <li>Manage the symptoms with paracetamol/ibuprofen and cool sponges.</li> <li>Increase fluids</li> </ul>

Illness	Symptom	Treatment
<p><b>Chicken Pox</b> <b>(Varicella-zoster virus)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly contagious</li> <li>• Spread through direct contact with person or lesion or droplets from coughing or sneezing</li> <li>• Contagious period from 2 days before the rash develops until all blisters have formed a dry scab.</li> <li>• Incubation period is 10-21 days after exposure.</li> <li>• Avoid contact with pregnant women.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever, sore throat and headache.</li> <li>• An itchy skin rash over the whole body.</li> <li>• Rash - small blisters surrounded by pink areas.</li> <li>• Blisters will gradually burst and form a scab (about 5 days after appearing).</li> <li>• Blisters may appear in the mouth.</li> </ul>	<p>Treat the symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give Paracetamol/Ibuprofen</li> <li>• Cool baths</li> <li>• Cool cloth compresses</li> <li>• Topical cream (ask your pharmacist for advice)</li> </ul> <p>Complications can arise – see your Doctor if concerned</p>
<p><b>Rubella (German Measles)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A viral infection</li> <li>• Can have serious consequences if a pregnant woman comes into contact with Rubella for her developing baby.</li> <li>• Highly contagious via coughing or sneezing or direct contact.</li> <li>• Infectious period is 7 days from before onset of the rash and up to 7 days after the onset of the rash.</li> <li>• Incubation period is 15-20 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mild fever</li> <li>• Mild rash on body, neck and face</li> <li>• Joint pain</li> <li>• Swollen glands</li> <li>• Headache, cough, cold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vaccination is available as part of the routine immunisation schedule to prevent the disease.</li> <li>• Make comfortable with paracetamol/ibuprofen.</li> <li>• Increase fluids.</li> </ul>

Illness	Symptom	Treatment
<p><b>Whooping Cough (Pertussis)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A bacterial infection</li> <li>• Highly contagious to an un-immunised child.</li> <li>• Spread via sneezing, coughing and direct contact</li> <li>• Contagious period is from onset of symptoms to no symptoms are present (up to 3 months)</li> <li>• Incubation period is 5 – 15 days after contact with an infected person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial symptoms are similar to a common cold.</li> <li>• Cough develops where child may have a coughing spasm lasting for a minute or more.</li> <li>• Characteristic “whooping” sound as the child tries to draw breath.</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Face may turn red or blue</li> <li>• May vomit after an attack.</li> <li>• May have no other symptoms between attacks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek medical advice</li> <li>• Prevention through the routine immunisation schedule is recommended.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ear Infection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caused by bacteria or virus</li> <li>• Babies and young children susceptible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ear pain, babies may pull and rub on their ears.</li> <li>• Fever may be slight or high</li> <li>• Fatigue and grumpiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not try to treat an ear infection on your own.</li> <li>• Consult with your doctor</li> <li>• Treatment may include antibiotics if necessary though most cases clear within 4-7 days without treatment</li> <li>• Recurring or severe cases may require surgery and the insertion of grommets.</li> </ul>



Illness	Symptom	Treatment
<p><b>Meningococcal Meningitis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly contagious</li> <li>• Acute bacterial infection</li> <li>• Life threatening</li> <li>• Inflammation of the spinal cord and brain</li> <li>• Followed by Septicemia (blood poisoning)</li> <li>• Passed by coughing, sneezing, kissing, sharing drinks and food.</li> </ul>	<p>Not all of these symptoms may be present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe headache</li> <li>• Fever (that may not respond to paracetamol)</li> <li>• High pitched cry</li> <li>• Fatigue, drowsy, lethargic</li> <li>• Stiff or painful neck</li> <li>• Sensitivity to light</li> <li>• Fontanelle bulges</li> <li>• Convulsions.</li> </ul> <p>More serious symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Cold hands and feet</li> <li>• Cold shivers</li> <li>• Severe aches or pain in the muscles, joints, chest or abdomen</li> <li>• Rapid breathing</li> <li>• Diarrhea</li> <li>• Later stages, a pinprick or purple bruise-like rash</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek urgent medical assistance</li> <li>• If you suspect Meningococcal Meningitis insist on rapid treatment</li> <li>• Vaccination is available as part of the routine immunisation schedule</li> </ul> <p>Prevention includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid sharing cups, eating utensils and toothbrushes</li> <li>• Babies and toddlers should be discouraged from sharing toys that have saliva on them.</li> <li>• Do not share a dummy or allow anyone to place it in their mouth to clean it.</li> </ul>



# Pain relief and your little one

There are few things harder than seeing your little one sick or in pain. It seems like a simple solution is to give them medicine, however the current recommendation is that Paracetamol or ibuprofen can make pain less severe, but they do not make the cause of the pain go away.

It's important to keep your medicine cabinet well stocked and out of reach of your little one's grasp at all times. Make sure you use the right product, strength and dose for the child's age and weight. Recommended doses, according to the child's age and weight, are given on the product packaging. The most common medicines are paracetamol and ibuprofen. But when should you give them and what exactly do they do?

We break it down for you:

Illness	Symptom	Treatment
<b>Paracetamol</b>	Effective at reducing fever and pain associated with immunisation.	Paracetamol can be given from the age of one month. Paracetamol can be given every four hours and no more than five times a day.
<b>Ibuprofen</b>	An anti-inflammatory drug, it reduces pain associated with swelling such as sore throats, earaches, tension headaches as well as fevers, cold and flu symptoms.	Ibuprofen can be administered from three months. It should not be given at the same time as paracetamol. Do not give ibuprofen if your child may be dehydrated due to vomiting or diarrhoea. Children with asthma should only take ibuprofen after discussion with your GP.
<b>Codeine</b>	Opioid analgesic. Much stronger than paracetamol so should only be used to control pain associated with acute earache, dental procedures, postoperative pain, soft tissue injuries and fractures.	It's generally not recommended for babies under 12 months. Short-term use of codeine is advisable and under your doctor's instructions.



# Five frequently asked questions when your bub is sick

Dr Duncan Jefferson, family doctor and a GP with over 30 years experience answers some of the most common questions when your little one is sick.

1. Do I give my baby milk or water when they are sick?  
*Water is always a safe bet especially if gastro is the cause.*
2. Does massage with baby oil help my baby when they are sick?  
*Gentle massage is a soothing thing for both mother and child. However, do not massage inflamed areas and be aware that if the child is "irritable", massage will only make things worse.*
3. Should I try giving them a multivitamin during winter to help their immune system?  
*The best thing for a healthy immune system is a healthy diet. Multivitamins might help if there is a proven lack of vitamin absorption but check with your family doctor first.*
4. If my baby is sick when should they get antibiotics?  
*Antibiotics should only be given for bacterial infections and yet most infections that toddlers get are viral in origin and antibiotics are then not only a waste of time, but can lead to bacterial resistance. Your doctor will know when it's right for antibiotics, so trust them!*
5. If my baby has a fever but it's winter and freezing cold, how should I dress them?  
*Common sense is needed in such circumstances. If the room is warm then minimal clothing might help bring down a temperature: if the room is very cold then a balance needs to be struck between heat loss and heat insulation. The important thing is that the baby is comfortable. If it's showing signs of "irritability" - persistent crying, twitching, not drinking, getting floppy - then prompt medical attention is required.*



# Coughs and fevers: when to see the doctor

During winter it's almost inevitable that you or your little one will come down with a cough or fever. So how do you know when to keep them home or when it's time to see the doctor? Here's a useful guide.

Illness	Home treatment	When to see the doctor
<p>Cough: this can be wet or dry in nature. Wet coughs will often sound worse than a dry cough, but a dry cough can be caused by serious issues like bronchiolitis.</p>	<p>Cough mixtures are NOT recommended. Instead keep their room warm and make sure your little one is hydrated. For a child older than one year a teaspoon of honey is suggested to help soothe the throat.</p>	<p>If your little one has a cough and a fever, or has a continuous cough for over 48 hours you should see your doctor.</p>
<p>Barking cough (croup): this is often accompanied by a runny nose, fever and sore throat. Its defining feature is a barking cough and your little one may struggle to breathe. Croup is a potentially serious condition.</p>	<p>Start with a steamroom. This means running a hot shower with the door closed and the fan off. It will help open your little one's airway. If this relieves your little one then continue with this method overnight. You should still see your doctor the next day.</p>	<p>If the steamroom treatment isn't working then it is important to take your child to hospital quickly. If they appear blue then call an ambulance.</p>
<p>Fever: the rule of thumb is that 38 degrees is a fever and 38.5 is defined as a 'high fever.' Fever is usually a sign of infection in the body. Fever is often caused by a virus and sometimes by bacteria.</p>	<p>Current guidelines suggest that paracetamol or nurofen are not necessarily needed to treat a fever. However they are useful if your little one is in pain. Make sure you follow the dosage instructions carefully. Give clear fluids to your little one and keep them as comfortable as possible by dressing them in enough clothing so that they aren't shivering.</p>	<p>If your child is under three months and has a fever. If they refuse to drink for 12-24 hours or the fever is accompanied by excessive vomiting or diarrhea. If they complain of a stiff neck or the light hurting their eyes.</p>

# Colic and reflux

Colic and reflux typically present as very similar conditions and there is no denying that both are equally distressing for both child and parent.

	Reflux	Colic
<b>Definition</b>	GER (Gastro Esophageal Reflux, a.k.a. "reflux") is defined as the backward flow of stomach contents into the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach)	Colic is a condition, usually in infants, characterised by incessant crying.
<b>Causes</b>	Exact cause not known. Associated with an immature digestive system, hereditary factors or food sensitivities	Common causes in a nursing baby are usually linked to foods in the mother's diet including broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, onions, garlic, or spicy foods. Caffeine or chocolate are also linked to causing colic.
<b>Signs</b>	Baby may suffer obvious pain, cry constantly or suddenly begin screaming. They may be irritable or vomit frequently (usually after a feed). They may struggle with feeding and have poor sleeping patterns.	Crying tends to happen after feeds. Usually for at least three hours per day at least three days per week for at least three weeks with no other explanation for the crying.
<b>Treatment</b>	Handle baby gently and burp often. After feedings, try holding baby upright for a half hour or let baby lie upright on your chest. Speak to your doctor about diagnostic evaluation and treatment options.	Infant massage can help to relieve the symptoms. The routine is quite specific and is best learned from a qualified infant massage instructor. Use a sling or front pouch during the period of the evening when the baby is most unsettled. This helps to keep the baby upright and your motion helps to sooth their discomfort.



# Four food fixers

Some common illnesses your little one may experience can be remedied with the right foods. Here are some great food ideas to help when they're sick.

## 1. Vomiting

A vomiting bout is often caused by a bug, contaminated food or drink or an infection elsewhere in the body

### **Treatment:**

- Make sure they have lots of fluids. This will help prevent dehydration.
- Keep their diet simple initially once the vomiting has stopped, though they can resume their normal diet fairly quickly.
- Give them bread, dry cereal and eggs.


Remember to see your doctor if vomiting continues for more than a few hours.

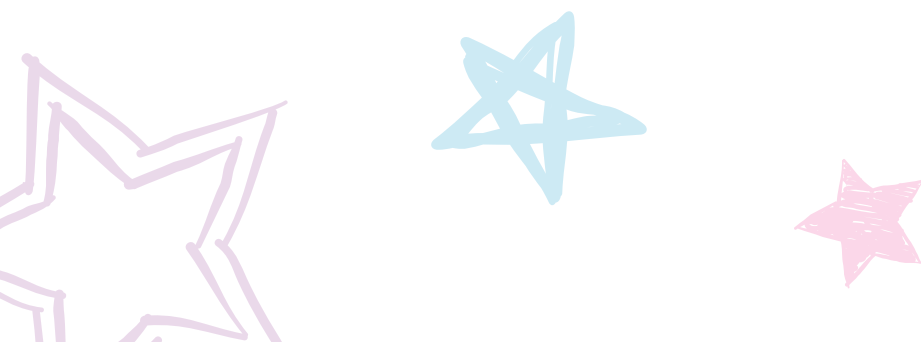
## 2. Diarrhoea

This is when your little one has loose, watery stools usually more than three times in one day. It's usually caused by bacteria, viruses or most commonly the rotavirus.

### **Treatment:**

- Rehydration is the most important treatment.
- Hydrations fluids like hydralyte.
- Plenty of water.
- Cut out milk, sweets and greasy foods until your little one starts to recover.
- Once they're better, gradually reintroduce simple foods like rice, crackers, toast and potatoes.

 If your little one's diarrhoea persists, they are under 3 months old, or they seem lethargic or feverish, see your doctor.



### 3. Gas

This is when your little one has a swollen tummy and will cause them cramps and pains. It is usually caused by bacteria in the intestine agitating undigested matter.

#### **Treatment:**

- This is often a case of cutting out foods that may cause the gas. This includes skipping the baked beans, onions, apples and broccoli until the tummy upset subsides.
- Sometimes a probiotic can be helpful.

If the diet changes aren't helpful, check with your doctor.

### 4. Constipation

This is when your little one has to strain to poo or they suffer from intermittent stomach pains. It's usually caused by lack of fibre in their diet or not drinking enough water.

#### **Treatment:**

- Encourage them to eat high fibre bread and cereals.
- They should eat at least 2 pieces of fruit a day and a cup of vegetables.
- Encourage them to drink lots of water.
- Check with your GP before trying any laxatives or suppositories.

If constipation persists or your little one is still struggling to poo, then see your doctor.



# Immune boosting shopping guide

This is our handy shopping guide for you. It contains foods that are rich in slow release carbohydrates, protein, iron and Vitamin C. By boosting your little one's immune system, you will boost their ability to fight off ailments.

A food that is a 'must eat' is garlic. As well as adding great flavor to food it also protects against germs and viruses. Studies have shown that if garlic is included in the diet, you will be less likely to get a cold and your recovery time will be faster.

## Bread, pasta, cereal

Wholegrain cereal	Wholemeal/multigrain bread
Pasta	Pita bread
Rice	Crumpets
Wholegrain wheat crackers	

## Vegetables

Asparagus	Beans
Broccoli	Cabbage
Capsicum	Carrots
Cauliflower	Corn
Cucumber	Garlic
Lettuce	Mushrooms
Onions	Peas
Potatoes	Spinach
Zucchini	

## Fruit

Apples	Avocados
Blueberries	Bananas
Grapes	Nectarines
Oranges	Pears
Pineapple	Watermelon

## Dairy

Cheese	Custard
Eggs	Milk
Yoghurt	

## Meat, fish and poultry

Chicken	Ham
Lamb	Mince
Salmon	Sausages
Steak	Tuna
White fish	



# Food exchange

In order to keep your little one's diet healthy and immune boosting, here are some easy food swaps that still taste great and will boost their immune system and energy levels!

Exchange this	For this
Puffed cereal	Wholegrain cereal
Cupcakes	Fruit muffins
Cheese sandwich	Egg and grated zucchini sandwich
Fruit juice	Water
Crisps	Pretzels
Ice-cream	Frozen yoghurt
Honey on toast	French toast
Pancakes	Ricotta pancakes with berries
Fast food thickshake	Blueberry smoothie
Tinned fruit	Freshly chopped fruit
Crackers and dip	Carrot and celery sticks with hummus
Jam sandwich	Egg on wholemeal bread
Vegemite on white bread	Crumpet with drizzle of honey
Tinned spaghetti	Baked beans





# Handy hygiene hints

Even with the best will in the world, it is almost impossible to prevent your little one from catching a cold or bug at some point. But to protect your little one as much as possible and to ensure any nasty germs and bugs don't spread to all members of your household, these are useful guidelines.

To protect bub:

- Wash your hands thoroughly before handling bub or anything that goes into their mouth.
- If you have symptoms of an infection, avoid kissing your baby on the head.
- Keep baby away from touching cold sores or rashes on others.
- Ensure family members follow the same rules.

The guidelines from [Sneeze Safe Kleenex](#) are great for older kids:



## 1. Catch it:

Germs spread easily, so make sure your kids always use a tissue when they sneeze or cough.

## 2. Bin it:

Germs can live for several hours on tissues, so throw the tissue away in a bin straightaway.

## 3. Kill it:

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch, so wash hands as soon as you can or reach for the anti-bacterial hand sanitiser if on-the-go.



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The Huggies Team



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