

FAMILY FIRST AID

WHEN TO WORRY ABOUT YOUR CHILD



WHEN TO GET URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION

(In babies and young children, illness can progress very quickly.)

SIGNS OF ILLNESS TO WATCH OUT FOR — THIS IS WHEN YOUR BABY OR CHILD SHOULD BE SEEN IMMEDIATELY BY A DOCTOR.

- Your baby vomits green fluid.
- Your baby has a convulsion (fit).
- Drowsiness — The more drowsy a baby/toddler is, the greater the chance of serious illness.
- Decreased activity or lethargy — If your baby/toddler is less alert than usual they make less eye contact, and are generally less aware of sounds and movement and of the immediate environment.
- Breathing difficulty — The baby may be breathing very quickly, or grunting with each breath. She may be coughing continuously. With each breath you may notice the muscles between the ribs being sucked in, or the baby may be blue around the mouth.
- Poor circulation — Your baby/toddler may look paler than usual, and this can last for up to several hours. Your baby's hands and feet may be cold or even blue.
- Poor feeding — When your baby drinks much less than usual. Breastfed babies will suck less strongly and for shorter periods of time. Bottle-fed babies may take less than half the normal amount of milk that they normally drink in 24 hours. The baby may not be very interested in feeding in general.
- Low urine output — If nappies are not normal, not very wet.

Source: www.kidshhealth.org, www.raisingchildren.net.au

COUGHS AND COLDS

Kids can get up to six to eight colds a year — or more. They tend to come good with time, rest and tender loving care (TLC).

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Stuffy, snotty, runny nose
- Itchy or sore throat
- Sneezing, coughing
- Headache, mild fever
- Feeling crabby, grizzly, tired
- Loss of appetite.



YOU SHOULD TAKE A CHILD TO A DOCTOR IF:

- Symptoms get worse or a cold lasts more than a week
- They have a barking cough or cough that causes spasms
- A high fever — that cannot be shifted
- Sore throat that makes eating and drinking difficult
- Bad headache

THINK PREVENTION!

- Avoid anyone who has a cold or smokes
- Wash hands well and often
- Sneeze and cough into tissues and sleeves — not hands!

ASTHMA

The most common features are a wheeze, a cough, difficulty in breathing (rapid and/or noisy breathing), tightness in the chest, and shortness of breath.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR

- your child's wheezing, cough or shortness of breath persist or become worse despite medication.
- your child is distressed and wheezing is getting worse even with medication.
- inhalers are needed more often than every three or four hours.
- one or two inhalations do not immediately make your child better.
- your child can't exercise or play normally, or cannot keep up with other children.
- your child's sleep is disturbed because of coughing or wheezing.

COUGHING is just as much part of the clinical spectrum of asthma as is wheezing. The cough is particularly evident at night and after physical exertion — sometimes the cough is the only sign.

****NB.** If your child has asthma they need medical help to manage it. A child can die from a serious complication from asthma.

CUTS, GRAZES AND SCRATCHES

It is important to keep an eye on even minor wounds as they can become infected.

YOU SHOULD TAKE YOUR CHILD TO A DOCTOR IF:

- the abrasion is deep and doesn't stop bleeding, even when you apply firm pressure.
- there's a lot of dirt, gravel or pieces of wood, metal or glass in the abrasion.
- it's a large abrasion with rough or jagged edges.
- the wound site gets infected — with pus or red streaks up the limbs

WHAT TO DO AT HOME?

Wash wound with clean water, dry skin around the cut and put a bandaid on it to keep it clean.

INSECT BITES, SPIDER BITES AND WASP STINGS

Most insect and ant bites and stings will be painful for a while, and maybe leave a red mark that slowly fades. Try washing the bite with clean water, maybe dab a little bi-carb soda on the bite or maybe some ice. However, if there is a strong reaction with itchy red lumps or even severe swelling, the child may be having an allergic reaction to the bite. This can happen with bees, fleas, spiders, some ants and even mosquitoes. If your child has severe swelling and itching at the site of the bite, and this interferes with sleep it may need a GP to check if there is any medication that can help.

SPIDER BITES

If your child is bitten by a funnel-web, white tail or red-back, they need to get to hospital or a doctor immediately.

WASP STINGS

If your child has persistent pain, or develops sudden difficulty in breathing, seek immediate medical attention.

Wasps are aggressive and can inflict multiple stings. Stings usually cause pain and swelling, but allergic reactions are not common. Remove the insect carefully and if it is dead keep it for later identification.

HEAD LICE

Head lice are very common in children, often first noticed due to the presence of eggs (nits) in the child's hair. Body lice are less common in children. Lice are tiny parasites that attach themselves to human beings.

WHEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR:

- If your child is itching excessively and it interrupts their sleep
- sores develop on the scalp, and weep or spread.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

The head louse is spread from person to person by close contact, despite close attention to hygiene. Children often have repeated doses of "nits" because they play with lots of kids!

HOW IS IT TREATED?

Anti-lice treatments are available from the chemist without a prescription. If you do choose to use them then use strictly according to instructions. It often requires several treatments and you must use a lice comb! Read instructions to treat home environment and to prevent further attacks.

