



# Children get ill!

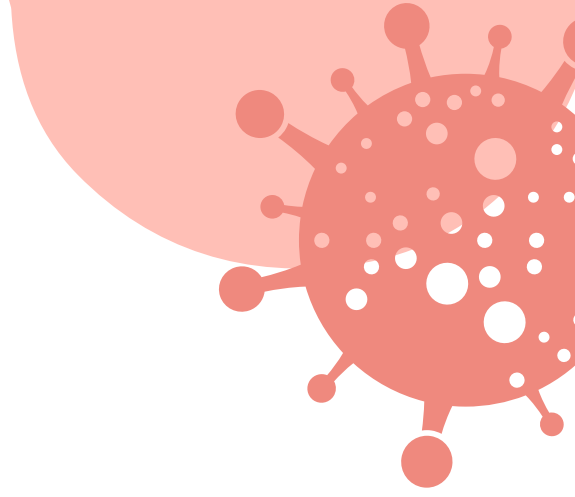


Your handy  
guide to  
common  
childhood  
illnesses, and  
how to treat  
them!



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You and your child are about to start a brand-new journey. Your baby is growing up and it's finally time for them to start school. But here's one thing that might surprise you about when they take those important steps into the classroom... at some point your child will get ill!

As your child, and other children, are exploring their new world, they'll also be sharing their germs. But don't worry, this isn't a bad thing! Germs can actually help to boost your child's immune system and make it stronger.

We've put together this handy guide on ways you can prepare in case your child does get sick, and how you can easily manage those illnesses from the comfort of your own home.





# Can my child go to school?

Going to school every day is a great way to boost your child's learning and development, gives them a safe space to socialise and helps to set a routine. Even missing a day or two can set your child back and can be stressful for them to catch up.

Most germs children come into contact with at school won't cause any problems. That means that even if your child is unwell, it is mainly safe for them to go to school!

**Remember, the school will contact you if they believe your child needs to go home**

There are a few special situations where you will need to keep your child at home:

- **Upset tummies:** If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they must stay at home for 48 hours until the symptoms have passed.
- **Chicken Pox:** Children should stay off school for five days from the start of the rash, and until the spots have crusted.
- **Impetigo:** Impetigo is a skin infection that is very contagious. It can start with red sores or blisters, which burst and leave crusty golden patches that may look a bit like cornflakes. If your child has impetigo, they need to stay off school for 48 hours after you have started treatment.
- **Conjunctivitis:** Conjunctivitis is an eye infection that is usually caused by infection or allergies and is contagious. Your child doesn't need to stay at home unless they're feeling unwell but if there are lots of children affected at school, they may advise you to keep your child at home until the symptoms have cleared.

**If your child is not feeling well, and you're unsure whether they can go to school, please call the school, or contact NHS 111.**

# Common Illnesses

We've already talked about lots of different bugs, infections, and viruses so far, but what are the illnesses my child is likely to get? And how do I treat them?

Don't worry, we're here to help. In this section we will go through the most common problems, and how you can make your child better without even stepping out of your door!





# Coughs & Colds



Did you know that your child can get a cough and/or a cold from 3 to 12 times a year? Coughs and colds are the most common illness your child can have, and it is completely normal for them to develop a few over the year while they're enjoying learning at school.

Coughs and colds get spread through contact with another person or object, or through the germs in coughs and sneezes that travel through the air easily.

Top tip: teaching your child to wash their hands regularly, cover their nose and mouth while coughing and sneezing, and using tissues to blow their nose really helps to stop the spread!

## Symptoms

- Fever (high temperature)
- Runny nose
- Blocked nose
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Earache
- Disturbed sleep
- Not wanting to eat
- Sad and irritable

We know it's difficult to see when your child is unwell, but don't worry, most of the symptoms will clear within 7-14 days, although the cough may continue for a little bit longer.

## Treatment

- Give regular paracetamol and/ or ibuprofen (if you're not sure what to give, flip to page 12)
- Encourage your child to drink more water than they usually do.
- Make sure they get plenty of fresh air. This could be opening your windows or encouraging short walks outside.
- Offer small regular meals with plenty of fruit and veg. Don't worry if they eat less - it can be a struggle to eat when your nose is blocked or you're in pain!
- Please don't give your child antibiotics, they will not help. Be patient - they will get better.

School offers a great distraction to children who have coughs or colds. Once they're getting stuck in with the fun of school, usually your child will forget they're not feeling too great!

You know your child best. If they don't seem to be getting better using the treatments above, get in touch with your local Pharmacist, Health Visitor or Minor Illness Nurse for advice.



# Chickenpox

Chickenpox is a mild and common illness that most children will catch at some point in their young lives.

It causes a rash of red, itchy spots that turn into fluid-filled blisters (like water filled blisters). The spots crust over to form scabs, which eventually drop off.

Some children may only have a few spots, but in others they can cover the whole body. The spots are most likely to appear on the face, ears, and scalp, under the arms, on the chest and belly and on the arms and legs.

## Symptoms

Feeling miserable and irritable, fever (high temperature) for the first few days; itchy spots; and a sore throat.

While there is no cure for chickenpox, there are medicines that can help make them feel better. Paracetamol can help to relieve fever and calamine in aqueous lotion, which is available at your local pharmacy, can help to ease itching. Do not give Ibuprofen. In most children, the blisters will crust up and fall off naturally within 1-2 weeks.

Chickenpox is contagious and can be caught by being in the same room as someone with the illness, or by touching clothes or bedding that has fluid from the blisters on them. It is the most infectious from 1-2 days before the rash starts, until all the blisters have crusted over (usually 5-6 days after the start of the rash).

If your child has Chickenpox, try to keep them away from public areas, including school or nursery. Also avoid contact with people who have not had Chickenpox before, especially those who are at risk of serious problems, like new-born babies, pregnant women and anyone with a weakened immune system.





# Earache

Another common illness in babies and small children is ear infection. They often follow a cold and can sometimes cause a temperature. Your child may pull or rub at an ear, but babies can't always tell where pain is coming from and may just cry and seem uncomfortable.

## Symptoms

- Pulling, tugging or rubbing their ear
- Fever (high temperature)
- Feeling irritable
- Poor feeding
- Restless at night
- Coughing
- Runny nose
- Not responding to quiet sounds
- Loss of balance

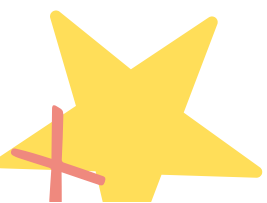
We know it's upsetting when your child is unwell, but don't worry, most ear infections clear up within a couple of days. If your child doesn't feel better after 3 days, contact your GP.

## Treatment

- Give regular paracetamol and/ or ibuprofen (if you're not sure what to give, flip to page 12)
- Encourage your child to drink more water than they usually do.
- Make sure they get plenty of fresh air. This could be opening your windows or encouraging short walks outside.
- Offer small regular meals with plenty of fruit and veg. Don't worry if they eat less - it can be a struggle to eat when your nose is blocked or you're in pain!
- Turn the bathroom into a steam room; steam can help clear a blocked nose and ears.
- Please don't give your child antibiotics, they will not help. Be patient - they will get better.

Don't worry if your child's hearing doesn't go back to normal straight away; it can take a couple of weeks. Speak to your GP if your child is still struggling with their hearing after 6 weeks.

**You know your child best. If they don't seem to be getting better using the treatments above, get in touch with your local Pharmacist, Health Visitor or Minor Illness Nurse for advice.**





# Head Lice & Nits



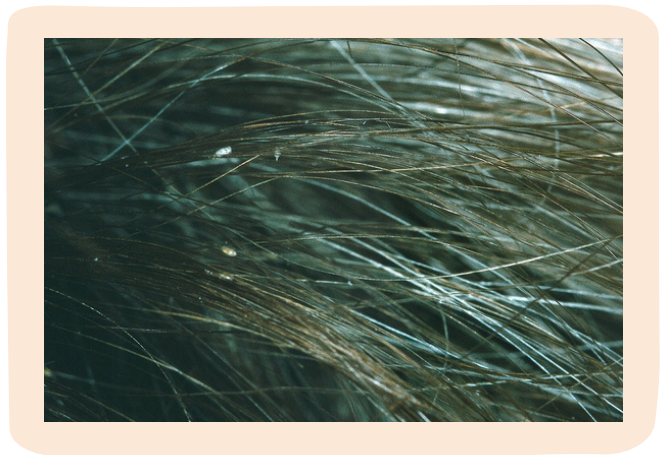
One of the most common things your child can pick up during their time in school is Head Lice. Did you know that getting Head Lice has nothing to do with dirty hair, and are picked up from heads touching?

Head lice will make your child's head itchy (and yours if they pass it to you!). It may feel like something in your hair is moving. Head lice can be hard to spot in your child's hair, but if you do spot them they will look like the below:

**Live Head Lice**



**Head Lice Eggs**

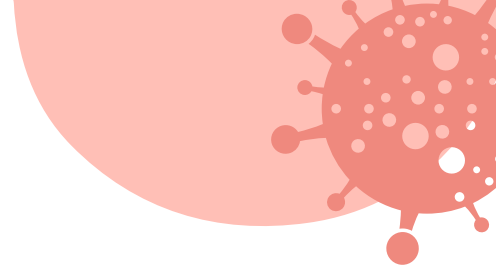


Try to treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You don't need to speak to your GP and can get rid of them using some simple items that can be found in your pharmacy. Make sure to check everyone in your house and start treating anyone who also has head lice on the same day.

Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing. Make sure to try this method first. You can buy a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb) online or from a pharmacy to remove head lice and nits.

Detection combs can come in different shapes and sizes. If you're not sure which comb you need to buy, your local pharmacist will be able to help.





## How to wet comb:

1

Wash with ordinary shampoo



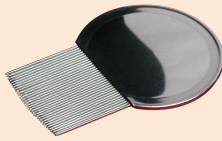
2

apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do)



3

comb the whole head of hair, from the roots to the ends



4

Do this twice a week for 2 weeks



**If you have tried wet combing and you haven't managed to get rid of Head Lice, speak to your local pharmacist about using medicated lotions.**

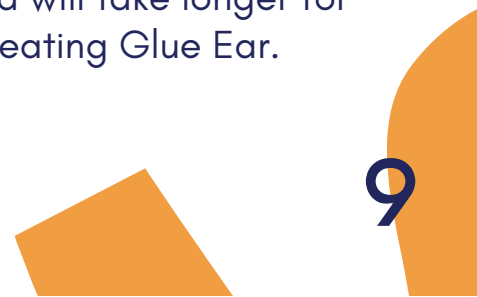
Head Lice shouldn't make your child feel unwell, so it is safe for them to go to school.

Unfortunately, you can't prevent your child getting Head Lice, but it is a good idea to check your child's head and wet comb regularly to catch them early.

## Glue Ear

Lots of middle ear infections (otitis media) may lead to glue ear, where sticky fluid builds up and can affect your child's hearing.

Glue Ear can lead to unclear speech or problems with your child's behaviour. If you smoke, your child is more likely to develop glue ear and will take longer for it to get better. Get in touch with your GP for advice on treating Glue Ear.



# Managing a fever

It can be upsetting when your child has a fever, but don't worry, a high temperature is one of the ways our body fights the germs. Most of the time, fevers do not cause harm unless they are really high.

There are lots of bugs, viruses and illnesses that can cause your child to have a fever, from common colds and Chickenpox, to tonsillitis and vaccinations (jabs).

## If your child has any of these symptoms, they might have a fever:

- feel hotter than usual when you touch them on their head, back or tummy
- feel sweaty
- have red cheeks
- have other symptoms which will help you decide why they have a fever, such as runny nose or earache

It's important that you keep an eye on your child's temperature when they're not feeling well. You can check your child's temperature by using a digital thermometer. These are available from pharmacies and even supermarkets.



## How to take your child's temperature

1. Clean the tip with cold water and soap, then rinse it.
2. Turn the thermometer on.
3. Put the tip under your tongue, towards the back of your mouth.
4. Close your lips around the thermometer.
5. Wait until it beeps or flashes.
6. Check the temperature on the display.

Most of the time you can look after your child at home. Their temperature should go down over 3-4 days.

Here are the do's and don'ts of managing your child's fever:



## Do

- Encourage your child to drink more water than they usually do.
- Be aware of how much they are weeing. If they're passing less than 50% or half of what they usually do, this could be a sign of dehydration (the body is getting dry).
- If they are feeling unwell or uncomfortable, give them regular paracetamol (if you're not sure how to check the dose, flip to page 12)
- Check on your child regularly - even during the night.



## Don't

- Undress your child or use water to cool them down - a high temperature is a natural and healthy response to infection
- Cover them up in too many clothes or bedclothes
- Give aspirin to under-16s
- Combine ibuprofen and paracetamol, unless a Doctor tells you to
- If your child is under 3 months, or under 5kg, don't give them ibuprofen
- Give ibuprofen to children with asthma unless advised to do so by your Doctor

Whilst having a fever or high temperature can be normal, there are some times when children do need to be seen by a Nurse or a Doctor. If your child has any of the below, please contact NHS 111 or your local GP:

- other signs of illness, such as a rash, as well as a high temperature
- has a high temperature that's lasted for 5 days or more
- does not want to eat, or is not their usual self and you're worried
- has a high temperature that does not come down with paracetamol or ibuprofen
- is dehydrated - such as reduced passing urine, sunken eyes, and no tears when they're crying



# Perfecting paracetamol & ibuprofen

There are lots of different varieties of paracetamol and ibuprofen that are available to buy at your local pharmacy or supermarket.

But how do you know which one you should purchase? And how do you make sure you're using it properly? Take a look at our top tips below:

## Remember your pharmacist is there to help:

- 1 Always tell them how old your child is before you buy paracetamol or ibuprofen. Some medicines are only suitable for older children or adults.

## Always read the instructions:

- 2 Even if you've given your child medicine before, make sure to read the instructions. This is where you will find how much you can give your child, and how often throughout the day. Never go over the stated dose.

## Make sure your meds are in date:

- 3 If you're using medicine from your stock cupboard, it's important you make sure that it hasn't expired. You can find out the expiry date on the medicine packet or the label. Medicine that has expired may not work and can also be unsafe.

## Scrap the sugar:

- 4 Although they may taste a little bit better, sugar free alternatives are better for your child's health.

# Where can I get help?

There are so many places you can get help when your child is feeling under the weather.

Most illnesses can be treated from the comfort of your own home with the stock cupboard items mentioned above, but if you do need advice here are our top places to contact:

## Choose Well manchester

Choose Well Manchester is a website that has fantastic information on how to manage illnesses at home, and where you can get help in your area.

[ChooseWellManchester.org.uk](http://ChooseWellManchester.org.uk)

## Your local pharmacy

Pharmacists can give you health advice and can talk to you about common problems like coughs, colds, sore throats, blocked noses, dry skin and more! Pharmacists can also suggest medicines that can help make your child feel better. Please check with your local pharmacy what services they can offer.

## NHS 111

If you have a medical problem and you're unsure what to do, get in touch with NHS 111. NHS 111 is available over the telephone by calling 111, or through their website [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk). This service is fast, free and easy to use and is available 24/7. You can use the service to: answer questions about symptoms, get advice on self-care, find out where you can go for help.

## Walk-In Centre

When you're GP or Doctors is closed; you can take a trip to your local walk-in-centre. These centres are free to use, and you do not need an appointment.

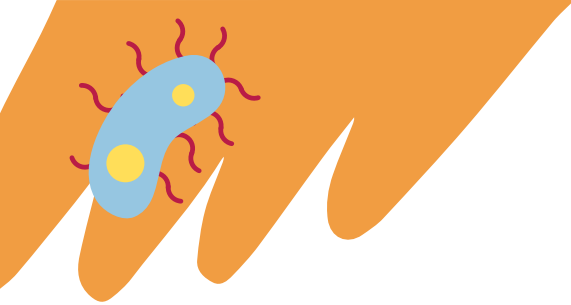
To find your nearest Walk-In Centre, visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

## A&E

If you, or your child are really unwell and self-care or local services can't seem to make things better, or when you're feeling so poorly that you need an ambulance, you can go to Accident & Emergency.

A&E is only for serious, life-threatening conditions that need help straight away.





Most of the illnesses your child will get when they're young aren't serious, but there are a few times that you should always seek help when your child is unwell.

### Contact your Nurse or Doctor if your child:

- Is under 3 months old and has a temperature of 38C or above.
- Is between 3-6 months and has a temperature of 39C or above.
- Has a fever that lasts more than five days.
- Is sleepy/weak.
- Is irritable and doesn't want to be picked up.
- Is crying uncontrollably and will not settle.
- Is not passing urine (wee/ pee) or is passing less than half of what they normally do
- Is breathing faster than normal.
- Has a rash that worries you.
- Has a new symptom that has not been mentioned in this leaflet.

### Call 999 if your child:

- Has a stiff neck
- Has not had a wee/ pee for a few hours
- Has a rash that does not fade when you press a glass over it
- Is bothered by bright lights
- Has a fit (can't stop shaking)
- Has really cold hands and feet
- Has pale/mottled skin (it may look grey or blue)
- Has a weak cry
- Is sleepy and hard to wake them up
- Will not stop crying
- Finds it hard to breathe (really fast/ really slow/ grunting)







# First Aid Courses

Knowing the basics of first aid can save lives. Not only will getting involved in a First Aid course teach you important techniques, but it can also give you the confidence to look after people who are unwell or have had an accident.

There are lots of organisations who offer first aid training, but the two main ones in the UK are the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance.

Take a look on their websites for more information on first aid courses:

[www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk](http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk)

[www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk)

# Keeping healthy tips for the whole family!



Getting fresh air every day is great for your mental health, and can help to reduce illness or infection.



Keeping your whole family active is a great way to stay healthy. Try a walk, run or even take a trip to your local park.



Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals, and can help to keep your family healthy. Try to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day.



Drinking plenty of water each day can help the whole family to stay hydrated. Try to drink between 1 and 2 litres every day to keep your mind and your body healthy.



Using tissues to blot runny noses and catch coughs and sneezes help to stop the spread of illnesses or infections.



Washing your hands regularly is the best way to stop germs from spreading.



Taking some time away from a digital screen can have a positive effect on both your physical and mental health - it can even improve your child's social skills and their schooling!



ZzZ

Getting a great nights sleep is proven to improve behaviour, learning, memory, and overall mental and physical health.