

Advice for parents during coronavirus

Whilst coronavirus is infectious to children it is rarely serious. If your child is unwell it is likely to be a non-coronavirus illness, rather than coronavirus itself.

Whilst it is extremely important to follow Government advice to stay at home during this period, it can be confusing to know what to do when your child is unwell or injured. Remember that NHS 111, GPs and hospitals are still providing the same safe care that they have always done. Here is some advice to help:



RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to the touch
- Has pauses in their breathing (apnoeas), has an irregular breathing pattern or starts **grunting**
- Severe difficulty in breathing becoming agitated or unresponsive
- Is going blue round the lips
- Has a fit/seizure
- Becomes extremely distressed (crying inconsolably despite distraction), confused, very lethargic (difficult to wake) or unresponsive
- Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass test')
- Has testicular pain, especially in teenage boys

You need urgent help:

Go to the nearest A&E department or phone 999



AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Is finding it hard to breathe including drawing in of the muscles below their lower ribs, at their neck or between their ribs (**recession**) or **head bobbing**
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)
- Is becoming drowsy (excessively sleepy) or irritable (unable to settle them with toys, TV, food or picking up) - especially if they remain drowsy or irritable despite their fever coming down
- Has extreme shivering or complains of muscle pain
- Babies under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F
- Infants 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F
- For all infants and children with a fever above 38°C for more than 5 days.
- Is getting worse or if you are worried
- Has persistent vomiting and/or persistent severe abdominal pain
- Has blood in their poo or wee
- Any limb injury causing reduced movement, persistent pain or head injury causing persistent crying or drowsiness

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today.


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

The NHS is working for you. However, we recognise during the current coronavirus crisis at peak times, access to a health care professional may be delayed. If symptoms persist for 4 hours or more and you have not been able to speak to either a GP or 111, then take your child to the nearest A&E



GREEN

If none of the above features are present

- You can continue to provide your child care at home. Information is also available on NHS Choices
- Additional **advice** is available to families for coping with crying of well babies 
- Additional **advice** is available for children with complex health needs and disabilities.

Self care

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

Parents frequently asked questions

Update 12 October 2020

The Connecting Care for Children team, with our Practice Champion Hanan Ghouneim, have been pulling together useful information to help answer questions from local parents:

What should I do if my child has symptoms of coronavirus?

Nearly all children who become unwell after going back to school will have a common cold virus, not COVID-19. You should do the same things you would have done to look after them before the COVID-19 pandemic. Children with cold symptoms such as runny noses or sore throats **without a fever**, should not be tested for COVID-19.

If your child has COVID-19 symptoms they should **get a test**. Your child and everyone you live with will need to stay at home and self-isolate until you get their test results.

If you are worried about your child contact your GP or NHS 111 – for children under 5 call 111, for children over 5 use the **NHS 111 online coronavirus service**.

How can you tell the difference between coronavirus symptoms and cold symptoms?

Some of the symptoms of a cold are similar to COVID-19, there's no way to tell the difference without a test. If your child has any one of the main symptoms of COVID-19 they should stay home and **get a test**:

- a high temperature - above or equal to 37.8°C (100°F)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-in-children/>

When should I worry if my child has symptoms of coronavirus?

Children can get coronavirus (COVID-19), but they seem to get it less often than adults and it's usually less serious. See the NHS advice for parents and what to do if your child has some of the coronavirus symptoms: <https://what0-18.nhs.uk/popular-topics/coronavirus>

What should I do if my child has a cough or temperature?

How to look after your child's cough or temperature and when to get help:

<https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/parentscarers/worried-your-child-unwell/cough-and-cold>

<https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk/parentscarers/worried-your-child-unwell/fever-high-temperature>

Can I give my child ibuprofen to help with coronavirus symptoms?

'Parents can give either paracetamol or ibuprofen, if needed, to treat symptoms of fever or pain unless your doctor has told you paracetamol or ibuprofen is not suitable for your child.'

<https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/resources/anti-inflammatory-medicines-covid-19-advice-parents-carers>

What should I do about routine vaccinations?

GP surgeries are making special efforts to make it safe for babies and children to still have their vaccinations e.g. using a separate entrance. **It is important that your child still has their routine vaccinations**. Contact your GP if you know your child is due a routine vaccination.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/booking-your-childs-vaccination-appointment/>

What if I'm worried about my children's mental health?

Good Thinking provides mental health and wellbeing advice for parents in London. They also have specific resources for autism, eating disorders and ADHD: <https://www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/advice-for/>

You can find more answers for [parents and carers frequently asked questions](#) on our blog.