



Comfort for COUGHS AND COLDS

THE FAMILY

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PARENTING

It's the rainy season, your child is more likely to be at risk from sneezes and sniffles so here are the symptoms and the best ways to treat them.

During the rainy season cold, coughs become more rampant but there is no need to panic, it's common for young children to get ill because the virus is in the air. What is important is that you have to be able to spot the difference between a normal run of the mill cough and something that's more serious.

COLDS

It may look like your child has got a permanent cold because the cold seems to be reoccurring but this is quite normal. There are hundreds of different viruses and children are meeting them for the very first-time. The good thing is that once they've had each one, they become resistant to it.

Therefore the more colds your child has now, the better her immunity will be in future.

Symptoms

Runny or blocked nose, sneezing, watery eyes, coughing and a sore throat.

Muscular aches and pains. She may develop a fever.

Treatment

Colds are caused by viruses, not bacteria so antibiotic won't help. Sometimes babies who are snuffy can't breathe easily when feeding or asleep. Raising the head of your baby's cot can help. So also can nose drops prescribed by a general practitioner (GP).

Menthol rub or drops put onto bed linen or clothes at night also help her breathe more easily but don't use any menthol products for babies under 3months.

Cold, non-acidic drinks, such as milk, will help soothe a sore throat.

COUGHS

Children with a cold may also have a cough. Although it can be distressing to hear your child coughing, it serves a purpose, and if your child is feeding, eating and breathing properly, it's nothing to worry about and will get better in one course.

Treatment

Give plenty warm, clear fluids to drink to ease her cough. If she's over

one year, you can try to give her a drink of lemon and honey.

Babies under 6months are usually admitted to the hospital. Give your child soft things to eat, avoid crumbly food, which could trigger vomiting and give a lot of fluids.

You may also be able to stop a coughing attack by slapping your child gently on the back.

FLU

This is a viral infection of the upper respiratory tract that can affect children of all ages and some adults as well. It spreads by coughing and sneezing as well as direct contact and the symptoms develop rapidly within three days after infection. In most cases it clears up within 10days.

Symptoms

Dry cough with a stuffy nose and sore throat.

Muscular aches and pains as well as a head ache.
Tiredness and weakness.
Fever.

Treatment

Infant paracetamol such as calpol can help to reduce fever and aches. Offer lots of warm drinks.

As flu is caused by a viral infection, antibiotics won't work, unless the GP thinks there is a bacterial infection equally present.

If your child has a bad cough that won't go away, or if she has a temperature or is breathless as well, this could indicate a chest infection. See your general practitioner as your child may need to be given antibiotics if it's caused by a bacterial.

WHOOPING COUGH

Whooping cough is the common term for a childhood illness caused by a bacterial infection. Babies under 6month are most prone to get affected and there is always the risk of it becoming more common due to the low take up of vaccinations.

Symptoms

During the first seven to 10days the main symptoms are a short, dry cough that occurs only at night, a runny nose and slight fever.

In the next stage of illness, which can last up to 12 weeks, the symptoms are easier to recognize and include bouts of 10 to 20 short, dry coughs, long attacks of coughing followed by a sharp intake of breath

which may produce a whooping sound although babies may not whoop. Vomiting is also caused by coughing and sometimes seizures.

Treatment

A 10-day course of antibiotics may be prescribed for your child and any sibling, to shorten the duration of illness. This is only effective, however if given in the early stages.

BRONCHIOLITIS

This is an acute viral infection of the lungs that causes inflammation of the bronchioles which is the smallest air ways in the lungs. Bronchiolitis may mainly affect children under 1year old. It can be a serious illness and usually occurs in epidemics during the cold seasons.

Symptoms

Initially the child's symptoms may be similar to a common cold.

After two or three days, additional symptoms may develop, including a dry, raspy cough, wheezing and or rapid difficult breathing, the child is reluctant to eat and abnormal drowsiness occurs.

Treatment

For mild bronchitis drugs may be prescribed by a doctor to give to your child at home.

You should give her plenty of fluids as well as regular small amounts of food.

Ask your (GP) general practitioner to show you how to slap your child's back to loosen thick mucus in her lungs. If it becomes severe then it needs to be treated in a hospital.

NOTE THIS WARNING SIGNS

Contact your doctor if your child has been coughing noticeably for a week or more.

Has a reddish tinge to the tongue, lips and face.

*A seizure
A temperature above 39oc (102f) or above 38oc (100f) if she is less than 6months old.*

*Has difficult or irregular breathing.
Abnormal drowsiness or floppy appearance.*

A reddish rash anywhere on the body, this could be a sign of meningitis.

Refuses to drink for more than six hours.

