

Respiratory health in children with cerebral palsy

A carer's guide

Overview

- Children and young people with cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities are more likely to get lung illnesses.
- This can mean more hospital visits. It can affect their quality of life and how long they live.
- It is important to notice the risks early and take steps to prevent serious lung illness.
- Your child's community Paediatrician (Doctor who specialise in children's health) will check their lung health every year.
- During this check, the Paediatrician will assess your child's risk of getting a lung illness or chest infection.
- They may arrange tests, send you to other specialists, or start new treatments to lower the risk of lung illness.

What can you do at home to help your child?

- Keep their teeth clean and visit the dentist regularly, at least once a year.
- Make sure that your child gets the flu vaccine every year.
- Keep them away from tobacco smoke.
- Feed them healthy foods to stay strong.
- Keep them active and do physical exercises.
- Keep clean and make sure both you/the carer and your child wash their hands often.

When to speak to your child's Doctor?

Tell your child's Paediatrician (through the School Nurse) if your child has any of the following, as they may need a check-up sooner than the usual yearly review:

- Two or more courses of antibiotics in the last year.
- Has been in hospital for a respiratory illness or chest infection.
- Has new or worse problems with eating or drinking, like choking, coughing, gagging or spluttering.

- New or worse reflux, like pain after eating, gagging, vomiting, coughing or hiccups.
- New or worse snoring at night.
- New or worse seizures.

Resources to help support your child's respiratory health

Dental Health



<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

If your child is not registered with a Dentist, you can use this site to find a local Dentist.

- If needed, the Dentist can send your child to a special children's Dentist.
- If your child has seen the Whittington's specialist children's Dentist at Tynemouth Road Health Centre before and needs a check-up, call 020 3316 8353.

Smoking

We know stopping smoking is hard. But help is available.



<https://oneyouharingey.org/smoke-free>

Access to support including a 12-week programme offering one-to-one support.



<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/>

NHS site with information and advice to help you stop smoking.

Physical activity and play



<https://markfield.org.uk/>

Markfield centre run inclusive after school and holiday clubs. They also have a soft play area and an outdoor playground.



<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/health-wellbeing/healthy-schools-programme/healthy-lifestyles-children-families>

Haringey Local Offer has a list of local sports and exercise opportunities including football, tennis, and dance.



<https://www.haringey.gov.uk/leisure-parks-culture/sport-physical-activity/get-get-active-people-without-disabilities>

Haringey Get Out and Get Active is a programme supporting disabled and non-disabled people to stay active. They link to lots of different providers.

Contact our service

Haringey Community Paediatrics

Call 020 3224 4726. Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Outside of these hours, please leave a message and we will call you back within two working days.

Email whh-tr.compaed-har@nhs.net.

Contact our Trust

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **020 7288 5551** or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net.

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet, please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

020 7272 3070 | Whittington Health NHS Trust, Magdala Avenue, London, N19 5NF
www.whittington.nhs.uk | x.com/WhitHealth | facebook.com/WhittingtonHealth

Document information

Date published: 12/01/2026 | Review date: 12/01/2028 | Ref: CYP/ComPaedHar/RHCCP/01
© Whittington Health NHS Trust. Please recycle.