

### Going home

Most babies make a quick recovery.

- On average, after three nights in hospital they are ready to go home, when they are feeding and breathing well
- Most babies take one to two weeks to recover fully
- They may have a mild cough and sniffles lasting up to two months
- There is usually no long term damage to the lungs.

### Please avoid smoking near your child

Research has shown that inhaling smoke can cause further irritation to your baby's chest.

Please note that it is rare for a child to catch bronchiolitis a second time.

### Any further questions?

Please contact the Children's Specialist

Nurse: 020 7288 5442

Or Day Care Ward: 020 7288 3769

Monday - Friday 7.30am - 7.30pm

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## Bronchiolitis

## Information for parents



This information is for parents of children with an inflammation of the tubes in the lungs, known as bronchiolitis. It explains what it is, what causes it, the symptoms and any hospital treatment that may be needed.

### **What is bronchiolitis?**

Bronchiolitis is the inflammation of the tubes in the lungs, which causes sticky fluids to be produced. About 10 per cent of babies will get bronchiolitis before their first birthday.

It can also affect children up to two years. Babies who are very young, born premature or have a previous lung or heart problem are likely to be more severely affected.

### **What causes it?**

It is caused by a virus, and is most common in winter and early spring. It is infectious, so it can be passed from one person to another by droplets of saliva, or droplets from a runny nose as with an ordinary cough or cold. An older person with the virus may only have mild signs of a cold. It is more serious in a baby.

### **What are the symptoms?**

It starts like a normal cold, although not many colds develop into bronchiolitis.

Over one to two days a child may develop:

- a runny nose
- an irritating cough
- a distressing cough which can lead to vomiting, and
- wheezy breathing.

They may have difficulty feeding, so give your baby small, frequent feeds.

If you are worried about your baby's breathing or feeding contact your GP.

### **If your baby needs to go to hospital**

If your baby needs to go to hospital, they may be tested for the virus by extracting a sample of secretions from the back of the nose.

They may also have a monitor (a lead attached to a sticking plaster) popped in between the toes or fingers to check the oxygen level in the blood.

A hospital doctor will discuss the results of these tests with you.

### **Treatment in hospital**

Your child may be seen and managed in the Children's Ambulatory Unit (CAU) where a doctor or nurse will explain what treatment is available. If it is necessary for your child to stay in hospital, you can stay with them all the time.

- If the oxygen in the blood is low, your baby will be given some extra oxygen to breathe
- If your baby is not feeding well a small tube may need to be inserted to feed them directly
- Most babies do not need any medicines and will recover well without them
- If the illness is more severe, your baby may need blood tests. Sometimes antibiotics are given if a bacterial infection is suspected and extra fluids can be given into a vein
- Bronchiolitis is easily spread to others, so your baby will be nursed in a separate cubicle or with other babies with bronchiolitis
- It is important that anyone touching your baby should wash their hands to prevent spreading the infection.