



# Upper Respiratory Infections Patient information Leaflet

June 2020

## Introduction

This leaflet aims to help you understand what a viral URTI is, and how to treat and care for your child with this condition.

### What is an Upper Respiratory Tract Infection?

- Often referred to as the 'common cold', this is a short infection involving the nose, sinuses and throat.
- It often affects children more than adults, as their immune system is not fully developed and so is more vulnerable to infections.
- These infections can last between 3 days to 2 weeks.

### What are the Causes?

- The most common cause for these infections is viruses, and there are over 200 different viruses that can cause this condition.
- Viruses can be spread through direct contact (by sneezing and coughing), and by indirect contact (by touching something someone has sneezed onto).
- These viruses attack the lining of the throat and nose causing inflammation (swelling) and increased mucus production, leading to symptoms of runny or blocked nose and sneezing.

### What are the Symptoms?

Common symptoms include:

- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Congested, blocked nose
- Cough

Other symptoms include:

- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Fever
- Headache
- Rash (blanching)

### When to Contact Your GP?

Contact your GP if you are concerned that your child has the following:

- Less than 3 month old with a temperature of 38°C or above,
- a 3-6 month old with a temperature of 39°C (102.2F) or above
- a child with a high temperature that doesn't come down after paracetamol and ibuprofen
- Symptoms that persist for 3 weeks or more.
- Difficulty in breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or are coughing up bloodstained phlegm
- Recurrent URTIs

### When to call an ambulance

Call 999 for an ambulance if your child:

- stops breathing
- won't wake up
- is under eight weeks old and you are very worried about them
- has a fit for the first time, even if they seem to recover
- has a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)
- if you think someone may have seriously injured your baby

Trust your instincts. You know what is different or worrying behaviour in your child.

### What is the Treatment?

In most cases the body is able to fight these infections on its own, but symptoms can be helped by the following methods:

- Taking Paracetamol (Calpol) and Ibuprofen to reduce the fever, as well as helping to ease any pains and headaches.
- To prevent becoming dehydrated by making sure that there are plenty of fluids to drink. If the child was admitted to hospital and was dehydrated, then the child may require a drip to administer fluids into the veins.
- Oxygen therapy is rarely needed, but is only required if the child is struggling with breathing and has a reduced level of oxygen in the body.
- Antibiotics are not usually advised as these infections are mainly caused by viruses, and so are useless in viral infections. Also antibiotics may cause side effects such as diarrhoea, nausea or rash. Therefore, antibiotics are only considered in cases when the child becomes severely unwell or develops a complication.

### How to Prevent Further Infections?

Since most of these infections are spread by viruses in the air, it is difficult to prevent the infection from occurring, however good simple hygiene measures can be very effective.

- Do not get too close to those with a cold, and do not get too close to others if you do get a cold.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, especially after touching your nose or mouth. Alcohol sanitising gel can be handy if you are on the go.
- Sneeze and cough into tissues, throw them away immediately, and then wash your hands.
- Clean surfaces regularly.
- Avoid sharing cups, plates, and kitchen utensils.
- Avoid using shared towels to dry hands and face, instead use disposable paper towels.
- Avoid the sharing of toys, and wash toys with soapy water after being used if children are unwell.

#### **Useful Contact Numbers:**

- Children's Unit 0161 922 5252 (24 hrs)
- Children's Community Nurses 0161 922 5251 (8am-8pm)
- NHS Direct 111 (24hr helpline)
- You can also contact your GP for advice.

#### **Useful Websites/information:**

- Department of Health ([www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk))
- NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions))
- NHS institute for innovation and improvement ([www.institute.nhs.uk](http://www.institute.nhs.uk))
- NHS Improvement ([www.improvement.nhs.uk](http://www.improvement.nhs.uk))

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

If you require an interpreter, please ask an appropriate person to contact our central booking office between Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm on 0161 922 6991 to arrange

this for you.

**語言 翻譯及病者支持服務 (LIPS):**

如果閣下需要翻譯員在您的預約當日幫助您的話 請找一名合適的家庭成員 **0161 922 6991** 聯絡本中

央預約辦事處來您您安排 我們的辦公時間是星期一至星期五 上午 8 時至下午 5 時

**Językowo Tłumaczeniowa Usługa Pomocy dla Pacjenta (Language, Interpretation and Patient Support Service LIPS):**

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy tłumacza w trakcie swojej wizyty, proszę poprosić odpowiedniego członka rodziny o skontaktowanie się z Centralnym Biurem Zamówień (Central Booking Office), w celu zorganizowania tłumacza pomiędzy poniedziałkiem a piątkiem w godzinach od 08:00 - 17:00 pod numerem **0161 922 6991**.

لینگویج، انٹرپریٹیشن اینڈ پیٹینٹ سپورٹ سروس (Lips)

اگر آپ کو اپنی اپائنٹمنٹ کے لئے مترجم کی مدد کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ مہربانی اپنے خاندان کے کسی موزوں فرد سے کہیں کہ وہ ہمارے سنٹرل بنگ آفس سے پیر سے جمعہ 8.00 بجے صبح سے 5.00 بجے شام کے دوران 0161 922 6991 پر فون کر کے اس کا بندوبست کریں۔

**References**

- NHS Choices (2018), Respiratory tract infections. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/respiratory-tract-infection/pages/introduction.aspx>
- NHS Choices (2018), Common cold. <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Cold-common/Pages/Commoncoldinchildren.aspx>
- Patient.co.uk (2016), Common cold (and other upper respiratory tract infections). <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/common-cold-and-other-upper-respiratory-tract-infections>
- Medscape (2016), Upper respiratory tract infection treatment & management. <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/302460-treatment#aw2aab6b6c13>

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