

Coughs, colds & flu

Not usually serious

You will probably find when your child starts mixing with other children they get lots of coughs, colds and sniffles. There are some good things about this though as it helps the body build up a natural immune system.

Flu can be more serious than a cold and leave your child feeling quite unwell. Flu tends to come on more suddenly and severely than a cold. Your child may feel achy and uncomfortable, and be ill for a week or more.

Most bugs will run their course without doing any real harm because they will get better on their own. An annual nasal spray flu vaccine is available from the age of two as part of the NHS Childhood Vaccination Programme. Ask your health visitor for details.

Things you can do at home to help:

- Give your child lots to drink.
 - Try **sugar-free** paracetamol or ibuprofen (not aspirin).
 - Keep them away from smoke and anyone who smokes.
 - Talk to your pharmacist but remember that coughing is the body's way of keeping the lungs clear.
 - Make sure they get plenty of sleep/rest.
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- **See your GP if:**
 - Your baby has a temperature of **38 °C (100.4 °F)** or more.
 - They have a fever with a rash.
 - They are not waking up or interacting.
 - Your child is finding it hard to breathe.
 - Persistent temperature does not respond to medicine.

Pharmacist says

Children can often be treated using over the counter medicines to help to bring down a raised temperature. Sugar-free paracetamol or ibuprofen can help. Check the label carefully. Some are available as a liquid for children and can be given from the age of three months. Check with the pharmacist and tell them how old your child is.

Flu symptoms are more severe and you may need to see your GP.

Don't pass it on:

Catch it - Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch coughs or sneezes.

Bin it - Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

Kill it - Hands can pass on germs to everything you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

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My child keeps coughing and sneezing, has a mild temperature and seems generally unwell.

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Have they recently started nursery? Catching colds is very common. Have you spoken to your pharmacist about **sugar-free** paracetamol and cough medicines?

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If symptoms last for more than 10 days or your child is coughing up yellow 'goo' they may have an infection. Contact your GP.

Source: 2013 NICE guidance.