



## One minute guide to...

### Bronchiolitis

#### What is it?

Bronchiolitis is an infection of the smaller airways in the lungs (called the bronchioles). It's more common in babies and very small children up to two years old and is generally caused by the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV is very common and spreads easily in coughs and sneezes. Bronchiolitis is not the same as Bronchitis (which affects the larger airways called Bronchi).

#### Symptoms?

Bronchiolitis is usually a mild illness occurring mostly from October to March when usual respiratory viruses are also circulating. However, in some children, including those that were premature, have existing heart, lung or immunity problems, there is a greater risk of developing severe bronchiolitis.

Symptoms can include a runny nose, mild cough, raised temperature of 38C, and headaches. A child with bronchiolitis may then get other symptoms from days 3-5 including:

- Rapid and noisy (wheezing) breathing
- Difficulty in eating and feeding
- Irritability
- A cough (that usually gets better in about 3 weeks) but adds to difficulty in breathing

Further information regarding symptoms, treatment and most importantly when to access medical support and help can be found at: [Bronchiolitis - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### How to reduce transmission?

Viruses are spread through the coughs or sneezes of someone who is infected. They can be breathed in from the air or picked up from a surface such as skin, toys, or door handles. To help to reduce the possibility of a child getting bronchiolitis the following actions should be taken:

- Everyone should wash their hands regularly, ideally with warm water and soap. [E-bug](#) resources can help younger children learning about bugs and hand washing.
- Encourage use of tissues for coughs, sneezes, and runny noses. Bin used tissues straight away.
- Keep babies or children, particularly if they could be at higher risk, away from anyone (adults and children) with a cold or cold-like symptoms if possible
- Do not smoke, particularly around children
- Access medical advice if you are concerned about your child's symptoms – contact your GP practice or call NHS 111

#### Further Information:

- NHS information: [Bronchiolitis - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Asthma and Lung UK information: [What is bronchiolitis? | Asthma + Lung UK \(blf.org.uk\)](http://blf.org.uk)

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Working for Cumberland Council and  
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