



Information for parents and carers of little ones under 5

This leaflet has information and advice on how to manage common illnesses in babies and young children.

Pharmacy

- Expert advice on minor illnesses
 - plus over-the-counter medicines.
- Prescription medicines for some conditions
 - without a GP appointment.

GP practice

- Some illnesses can be tricky to deal with at home - or you may need help after a few days.
- The GP out of hours service is there when your practice is closed. Call your practice for details.

Urgent treatment centre / walk-in centre

- For urgent medical help when it's not an emergency.
- You don't need an appointment.

A&E

- For serious or life-threatening health conditions.
- People who are seriously unwell will be seen first.
- Contact a pharmacy, your GP practice, or NHS 111 before going to A&E.

NHS 111



If you're not sure what to do or where to go, NHS 111 can help. It's available 24/7, 365 days a year.

NHS 111 can tell you where to go AND book you a time slot (if needed). So, there's less waiting when you get there.

To use British Sign Language go to:

<https://signvideo.co.uk/nhs111>

If you have hearing problems, call:

18001 111 using the Relay UK app or a textphone.

For help in other languages:

Call 111 and ask for an interpreter.

Call 111 for free

Or

Go to www.111.nhs.uk for people aged 5 years and over.

High temperature (fever)

Good to know:

A fever is very common in young children, it's the body's natural response to fighting infections like coughs and colds, and will usually return to normal within 3 to 4 days.

Things you can do:

- Encourage them to rest and drink plenty.
- Don't wrap your child up.
- Give children's paracetamol or ibuprofen (check packaging/leaflet for age restrictions).
- Check their temperature (use a digital thermometer if possible).
- Keep them away from school and nursery.
- Check for any rashes and signs of dehydration.

Contact your GP practice or call NHS 111 if your child:

- Is under 3 months and has a temperature over 38°C.
- Is older than 3 months and has a temperature above 39°C.
- Has a fever for 5 days or more and other signs of illness, such as a rash.
- Is showing signs of dehydration – such as nappies that are not very wet, sunken eyes, and no tears when they're crying.

Coughing

Good to know:

Most coughs are caused by a virus, so antibiotics won't help. If your child is feeding/eating, drinking, and breathing normally, a cough is usually nothing to worry about.

Things you can do:

- Encourage them to rest and drink plenty.
- Try a warm lemon juice and honey drink (over 1 year only).
- Keep them at home if they have a high temperature.

Contact your GP practice or call NHS 111 if your child:

- Has a cough that lasts longer than 3 weeks.
- Has a cough that continues for a long time, especially if it's worse at night or brought on by physical activity.
- Has a high temperature (38°C or more).
- Is wheezing.

Croup

Good to know:

Children usually start with cold-like symptoms, then signs of croup come on after a few days. Croup is caused by a virus - antibiotics won't help. It usually gets better within 48 hours.

Symptoms:

- A barking cough.
- A hoarse voice.
- Difficulty breathing.
- A high pitched, rasping sound when breathing in.

Things you can do:

- Sit your child upright - try not to let them lie down.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- Give children's paracetamol or ibuprofen (check packaging/leaflet for age restrictions).
- Keep them at home for 48 hours.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or call NHS 111 if:

- You think your child may have croup.
- They are no better, or are getting worse, even after seeing a GP.

Tonsillitis

Good to know:

Tonsillitis usually gets better on its own after a few days, but it can last longer. It's usually caused by a virus.

Symptoms:

- Painful, swollen glands.
- A sore throat, possibly with pus filled spots or white patches.
- A high temperature.
- A cough, headache and/or earache.
- Feeling sick and/or being sick.

Things you can do:

- Encourage your child to rest and drink plenty.
- Give children's paracetamol or ibuprofen (check packaging/leaflet for age restrictions).
- Ask a pharmacist about over-the-counter medicines.

Contact your GP practice or call NHS 111 if your child:

- Has symptoms that last more than a week.
- Keeps getting throat infections.
- Has pus-filled spots on their tonsils.
- Is struggling to eat and drink.

Earache

Good to know:

Earache in children is usually caused by a virus and will improve after a few days.

Symptoms:

- Rubbing or pulling at their ear.
- A temperature of 38°C or above.
- Losing their balance.

Things you can do:

- Place a warm or cold flannel on the ear.
- Talk to a pharmacist about over-the-counter medicines or prescription medicine without a GP appointment (1 year and over).

Contact your GP practice if your child:

- Has earache for more than 3 days.
- Keeps getting earache.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or call NHS 111 if your child has:

- A very high temperature.
- Swelling around their ear.
- Fluid coming from their ear.
- Hearing loss or a change in hearing.
- Something stuck in their ear.
- Earache in both ears and is under 2 years.

Measles

Good to know:

Measles is caused by a virus – antibiotics won't help. It usually starts to get better in about a week but can be very serious. The number of people catching measles is rising. The best way to prevent measles is 2 doses of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine. Contact your GP practice if your child hasn't had theirs.

Symptoms:

- Measles usually starts with cold-like symptoms, followed by a rash a few days later.
- The spots are sometimes raised and join to form blotchy patches. They're not usually itchy.

Things you can do:

- Encourage your child to rest and drink plenty.
- Give children's paracetamol or ibuprofen (check packaging/leaflet for age restrictions).
- Use cotton wool and warm water to remove crusts from your child's eyes.
- Keep them at home for at least 4 days from when the rash appears.

If you think your child may have measles, stay at home and contact your GP practice or NHS 111.



It's very important that you stay away from GP practices, A&E departments, and other health services so you don't pass measles on to others.

Rashes

Good to know:

Many things can cause a rash in babies and children - they're often nothing to worry about and will go away on their own.

Contact your GP practice if your child:

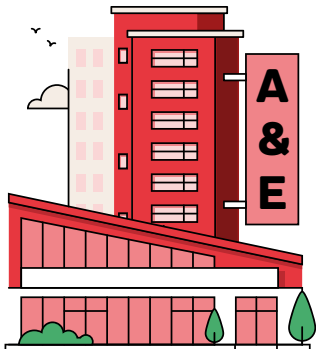
- Has a rash of small, raised bumps that feels rough, like sandpaper – plus a high temperature.
- Has sores or blisters on their skin that burst and leave crusty, golden-brown patches.
- Has itchy, dry and cracked skin.

Ask for an urgent GP appointment or contact NHS 111 if your child:

- Has a rash you're worried about.
- Is under 3 months old and has a temperature of 38°C or higher.
- Is aged 3 months or older and has a temperature of 39°C or higher.

Call 999 or go to A&E if your child has any of these symptoms:

- Blue, grey, pale, or blotchy skin.
- Has a rash that does not disappear when a glass is lightly pressed against the skin.
- Severe difficulty breathing.
- Sudden swelling of lips, mouth, throat or tongue.
- A fit or seizure for the first time.
- A stiff neck and pain when looking at bright lights.
- A sudden, severe headache or tummy ache.
- Confused and/or sleepy and not responding as usual.



If you would like this information in another format, or translated into a different language, please email **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

如果您希望以其他格式获得此信息，或将其翻译成其他语言，请发送电子邮件至 **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Jeżeli chciał(a)byś otrzymać te informacje w innym formacie lub w innej wersji językowej, prześlij wiadomość na adres **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

إذا كنت ترغب في هذه المعلومات بتنسيق آخر، أو مترجمة إلى لغة أخرى، يرجى إرسال رسالة بالبريد الإلكتروني إلى **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

اگر کسی اور فارمیٹ، میں یا کسی اور زبان میں ترجمہ شدہ آپ کو یہ معلومات چاہیے، تو براہ کرم پر ای میل **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

Dacă doriți aceste informații în alt format sau traduse într-o altă limbă, vă rugăm să trimiteți un e-mail la **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

আপনি যদি এই তথ্যটি অন্য ফরম্যাটে বা অন্য ভাষায় অনুবাদ করতে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে এখানে ইমেল করুন **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

نه گهر نه زانياربانه به فورماتئكي تر، يان وهرگئردراو بؤ زمانئكي جياواز ده ته وئت، تكايه نيمه يل بنئره بؤ **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

اگر می خواهید این اطلاعات را در قالبی دیگر یا به صورت ترجمه شده به زبانی دیگر دریافت کنید، لطفاً به **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net** ایمیل بفرستید

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Se desejar obter estas informações noutro formato ou traduzidas para outro idioma, envie um e-mail para **gmhscp.gm-campaigns@nhs.net**

All information is correct at the time of going to print - November 2025.

