

Bronchiolitis

What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is an infection of the small air sacs and passages in the lungs. It may begin with a runny nose and fever, like a cold.

Bronchiolitis is caused by a virus. It can spread to others easily by contact, sneezing or coughing.

The symptoms of bronchiolitis include:

- wheezing (a high-pitched, whistling sound with breathing)
- fast breathing
- coughing

The symptoms of bronchiolitis usually get better after 1 week, but may last up to 1 month.

Bronchiolitis can be more serious in children under 1 year of age or babies who were born premature.

What can I do to help my child?

- A puffer medication may help some children with bronchiolitis. If the doctor prescribes a medication to help your child's breathing, give the medication to your child as directed.
- Try to give your child plenty of fluids. It may be harder for your child to eat and drink if he or she has a stuffy nose and feels tired.
- Do not let anyone smoke in your home. Smoke will make your child worse.
- Saline drops and suctioning the nose can be helpful.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's family doctor or pediatrician if you notice **ANY** of the following:

- your child's fever lasts more than 3 days
- your child's cough lasts more than 3 weeks

When should my child go to the Emergency Department?

Bring your child to the Emergency Department at the hospital if you are not able to reach your doctor or you notice **ANY** of the following:

- your child is struggling to breathe – for example: breathing very fast, severe wheezing, or the ribs and chest pull in with each breath
- your child looks or acts very sick – for example: very tired or weak, not drinking fluids or difficult to wake
- your child is unable to drink or is vomiting and not tolerating fluids
- you are concerned about your child

If your child turns blue or stops breathing, call 911.