

## Bronchiolitis

- Bronchiolitis is a viral infection that affects babies and children up to 2 years of age
- 1 in 3 children by the age of 1 year will have had bronchiolitis, with most of these being between 3-6 months of age
- Bronchiolitis is most common in the months October through to March
- The infection starts with symptoms of a 'cold', with a runny or blocked nose
- After 2-3 days the small airways in the lungs (called bronchioles) become inflamed and make lots of mucus
- Your child's breathing can often be described as sounding 'like a coffee machine' because their chest can sound full of funny rattles and wheeze
- The 'fruity/musical' sounding cough can last for about 3 weeks, but the child will be well
- The blocked nose and the mucus that the lungs are making means that your child will find it harder to feed (especially babies who breath through their noses) and they will have to make more effort with their breathing. Giving smaller amounts of milk, but more often (or breast feeding for a shorter time but offering more frequent feeds) will mean your baby doesn't get so tired and continues to get enough milk or fluids
- In **most** children the viral infection is **mild** and their breathing and reduced feeding will be much better within 5 days
- No medicines are needed to cure bronchiolitis, but if your child is unhappy and in distress with the cough and has a fever then paracetamol or ibuprofen can be given
- 97 out of 100 children who have bronchiolitis can be cared for at home
- Only 3 out of every 100 children with bronchiolitis need help at hospital because the bronchiolitis is more severe and they need support with oxygen to help with the breathing and help with fluids
- The children with the highest chance of needing help in hospital are those under the age of 3 months, those born very prematurely, and young children with other conditions such as cystic fibrosis, or heart or muscle problems such as cerebral palsy

### Seek medical advice/help for your child;

- if they are grunting (an 'effort' noise with every breath)
- if they are flaring their nostrils, sucking in their chest between their ribs or bobbing their heads
- taking less than half of their usual fluids or having no wet nappies for 12 hours
- has a temperature of 39°C or more if 3-6 months of age

### Seek urgent help if your child;

- is breathing more than 60 breaths per minute (1 breath every second)
- is pausing in breathing for more than 10 seconds, especially if your baby is under 3 months of age
- has blue lips or your baby is floppy and exhausted/difficult to wake up
- has a temperature of 38 ° C or more in a baby less than 3 months of age