

Bronchiolitis

Bronchiolitis is an infection of the breathing tract. The infection is usually caused by a virus (such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus). It cannot be cured with antibiotics. The virus must run its course and can last as long as six weeks.

Symptoms of bronchiolitis include:

- Rapid heavy breathing
- Wheezing (tight breathing)
- Fever
- Cough (which can occasionally cause vomiting)
- Lots of mucus from the nose and mouth

Things to do at home:

- You can give acetaminophen (Tylenol®) every four to six hours for fever greater than 101° F (38.3° C). Check the package for the amount to give based on your child's weight and age. **Do not** give more than five doses in 24 hours.
- Bulb suction your infant's nose before feeding and before putting him down to sleep. This helps clear the mucus from the airway and makes breathing easier.
- Encourage your child to rest often. He may not eat as much as usual because he is sick and tires easily.
- Elevate the head of the bed to help with drainage of mucus.
- Encourage your child to drink fluids in small amounts. Give liquids often and at room temperature to relax his throat and lessen his cough.
- A cool mist vaporizer or humidifier can help your child breathe easier. Change the water every day. Clean the machine once a week by running ½ strength vinegar through it for 2 hours, and then rinse with clean water.
- **DO NOT** let anyone smoke around your child or in your home. Smoke can make the wheezing and coughing worse.
- Good handwashing can help decrease the spread of viruses causing bronchiolitis.
- Viruses causing bronchiolitis are contagious. Germs can live on objects, like toys, for 2 or 3 hours or longer. It is a good idea not to share toys. Clean your child's toys often with soap and water.

Call 911 if your child stops breathing.

Call your child's doctor if:

- your child's breathing changes (gets faster or more noisy)
- your child's wheezing increases with retractions (skin tugs in between the ribs).
- your child has a fever and is less than 6 months old.
- your child has a fever of 103° F (39.5° C) or greater for two days. (See Fever Care Card)
- your child won't eat, drink or take a bottle.
- your child does not have a wet diaper or does not go to the bathroom in 12 hours.
- your child is pulling at his ear(s) or complains of an earache.
- the color of your child's lips, skin and /or fingernails changes (pale or blue).
- you have questions or concerns that your child is getting sicker.