**Children's colds**

Children have 5 to 8 colds a year on average.

This is because there are hundreds of different cold viruses and young children have no immunity to any of them as they have never had them before.

They gradually build up immunity and get fewer colds.

Most colds in younger children get better within 2 weeks.

Here are some suggestions for how to ease the symptoms in your child:

* Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids.
* Saline nose drops can help loosen dried snot and relieve a stuffy nose.
* If your child has a [high temperature](https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/fever-in-children/) and seems distressed or has pain or discomfort, children's [paracetamol](https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/paracetamol-for-children/) can help.
* Encourage the whole family to wash their hands regularly and wear masks if possible to stop the cold spreading.

**Cough and cold remedies for children**

Children under 6 should not have over-the-counter cough and cold remedies, including [decongestants](https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/decongestants/), unless advised to by paediatrician.

**Children's sore throats**

Sore throats are often caused by viral illnesses such as colds or flu.

Your child's throat may be dry and sore for a day or 2 when they have a cold. You can give them paracetamol to reduce the pain.

Most [sore throats](https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/sore-throat/) get better on their own after a few days.

See a paediatrician if your child has a sore throat for more than 3 days, a high temperature and is generally unwell.

Go to nearby hospital emergency immediately if they're unable to swallow fluids or saliva or have any difficulty breathing, as they'll need urgent treatment in hospital.

**Children's coughs**

Children often cough when they have a cold because of mucus trickling down the back of the throat.

If your child is feeding, drinking, eating and breathing normally and there's no wheezing, a cough is not usually anything to worry about.

Although it's upsetting to hear your child cough, coughing helps clear away phlegm from the chest or mucus from the back of the throat.

If your child is over the age of 1, they can try drinking a warm drink of lemon and honey.

To make hot lemon with honey at home, you need to:

* squeeze half a lemon into a mug of boiled water
* add 1 to 2 teaspoons of honey
* drink while still warm (do not give hot drinks to small children)

If your child has had a cough that's lasted longer than 3 weeks, see a paediatrician.

If your child's temperature is very high, or they feel hot and shivery, they may have a chest infection. You should take them to a paediatrician.

If this is caused by bacteria rather than a virus, the Paediatrician will prescribe antibiotics to treat the infection. Antibiotics will not soothe or stop the cough straight away.

If a cough continues for a long time, especially if it's worse at night or is brought on by your child running about, it could be a sign of [asthma](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/).

Take them to a Paediatrician, who will be able to check if your child has asthma.

Go to a nearby hospital emergency department immediately if your child is finding it hard to breathe, as they'll need urgent treatment in hospital.

**Croup**

A child with croup has a distinctive barking cough and will make a harsh sound, known as stridor, when they breathe in.

They may also have a runny nose, sore throat and high temperature.

Croup can usually be diagnosed by a Paediatrician and treated at home.

But go to a nearby hospital emergency department immediately if your child's symptoms are severe and they're finding it hard to breathe, as they'll need urgent treatment in hospital.

**Children's ear infections**

Ear infections are common in babies and small children. They often follow a cold and sometimes cause a [high temperature](https://www.nhs.uk/symptoms/fever-in-children/).

A baby or toddler may pull or rub at an ear. Other possible symptoms include a high temperature, irritability, crying, difficulty feeding, restlessness at night, and a cough.

If your child has earache, with or without a high temperature, you can give them paracetamol at the recommended dose.

You should not give children paracetamol and ibuprofen at the same time unless advised to by a healthcare professional.

Do not put any oil, eardrops or cotton buds into your child's ear, unless a Paediatrician advises you to do so.

Most ear infections get better by themselves, usually within about 3 days. Take your child to a Paediatrician if they have earache that does not start to get better after 3 days.

A Paediatrician might prescribe medicine, depending on what's causing the ear infection.

After an ear infection, your child may have some hearing loss. See a Paediatrician if you think your child has hearing loss.

Their hearing should get better within a few weeks. But they may need treatment if hearing loss lasts for more than 3 months.

**Glue ear in children**

Repeated middle ear infections (otitis media) may lead to glue ear (otitis media with effusion), where sticky fluid builds up and can affect your child's hearing.

This may lead to hearing loss, which is usually temporary.

If you smoke, your child is more likely to develop glue ear and will get better more slowly.

A Paediatrician can give you advice on treating glue ear.

***Adopted from NHS / UK***