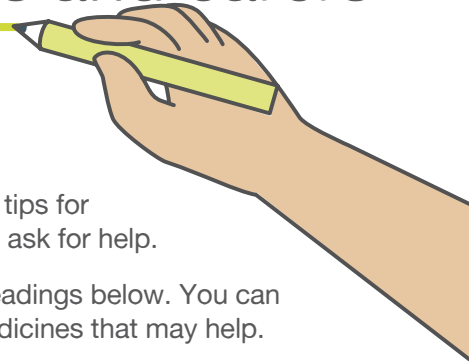


# Taking care of common childhood ailments at home: a quick reference guide for parents and carers



**It can be worrying when children are ill, especially if you're not sure what to do.**

Often taking care of your little one at home is the best thing to do. This guide has tips for dealing with some of the most common childhood ailments at home and when to ask for help.

For more information and advice go to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) or click on the links in the headings below. You can also ask your local pharmacy for advice and suggestions for over the counter medicines that may help.

Your GP practice is still there for you. For your safety, you will need to contact them by phone or online to begin with so they can decide if a face to face appointment is needed.

You can access NHS 111 by phone or online at [www.111.nhs.uk](http://www.111.nhs.uk) (only for children aged over 5 years) if your practice is closed.



## DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING

- Often caused by a stomach bug and should stop in a few days.
- Keep your child at home for at least 2 days so they don't pass it on to others.
- Make sure they get plenty of rest and encourage them to keep sipping water.
- A pharmacist can advise on over the counter medicines if you think they're dehydrated.
- Contact your GP practice or 111 if diarrhoea lasts for more than 7 days, or they are vomiting for more than 2 days.



## TUMMY ACHE

- Most tummy aches are nothing serious and will go away after a few days.
- A pharmacist can provide advice on what might be causing the pain and suggest over the counter medicines that could help.
- Contact your GP if the pain gets much worse quickly, will not go away or keeps coming back, or your child is struggling to swallow, losing weight, weeing more or less often, or has severe constipation.
- You're unlikely to need the Emergency Department (A&E) unless your child's tummy ache is severe and came on very suddenly, or it hurts when you touch their stomach.
- Children often have a sore throat with a cold or other virus.



## SORE THROAT

- Even if its tonsillitis, antibiotics aren't usually needed.
- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with the pain and encourage your child to drink lots of water and get plenty of rest.
- A pharmacist can offer advice and over the counter medicines to ease a sore throat.
- It will usually get better by itself but contact your GP if a sore throat lasts longer than a week, or your child has a high temperature (over 38°C).



## TONSILLITIS

- Tonsillitis is usually caused by a virus, so most children won't need antibiotics.
- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with the pain and encourage your child to drink lots of water and rest.
- A pharmacist can offer advice and over the counter medicines to ease a sore throat.
- Contact your GP practice if there are white spots on the throat or if symptoms don't clear up within 4 days.



## EARACHE

- Earache is common in children and is usually caused by an ear infection.
- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen to help with the pain.
- Try a cool or warm flannel on the ear to ease discomfort.
- A pharmacist can offer advice and suggest over the counter medicines that may help.
- Contact your GP if your child has a high temperature (over 38°C), swelling around the ear, fluid coming from it, a change in their hearing or if the pain doesn't go away after 3 days.



## HIGH TEMPERATURE

- A high temperature (over 37.8°C) is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. Book a test via [www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and stay at home while you wait for the result.
- Lots of viruses can cause a high temperature so it could be due to a cough, cold or other childhood illness.
- Paracetamol can help to lower your child's temperature and make them more comfortable.
- Make sure they drink plenty of water and rest.
- Try sponging or bathing your child with lukewarm water.
- Contact your GP if your child has a rash, isn't eating, may be dehydrated, paracetamol doesn't help, or they still have a temperature after 5 days.
- Always contact your GP if your child is aged under 6 months and has a temperature.



## RASH

- Many things can cause a rash in babies and children, and they're often nothing to worry about.
- If you're worried, contact your GP, particularly if your child seems unwell and has a high temperature (over 38°C).
- Go to the Emergency Department (A&E) if the rash doesn't fade when you press a glass against it.



## CUTS AND GRAZES

- Most cuts and grazes are minor and can be easily treated at home by stopping any bleeding, cleaning the wound and covering it with a plaster or dressing.
- Minor wounds should start to heal within a few days.
- Your local pharmacist may also be help with minor injuries.
- Contact your GP if you think it could be infected.
- You're unlikely to need the Emergency Department (A&E) unless you can't stop the bleeding, your child's wound is very large, or you think there could be something in it.