



## Patient Information: Bronchiolitis



Cork Emergency Medicine  
<https://EMed.ie>

Patient label here please

### What is it?

Bronchiolitis is a common chest infection, especially affecting infants <12 months age.

It is caused by a viral infection in the lungs. It causes swelling and mucous build up in the small airways of the lungs, making it difficult for your baby to breathe and feed.

### Symptoms

It begins as a cold: sneezing, runny or blocked nose and cough.

Here are some other things you look for:

- Fast breathing
- Noisy or wheezy breathing
- Reduced feeding
- Tummy and chest sucking in
- Irritability
- Fever

Symptoms are worst on day 3-5 of the illness and may last up to 10 days. Coughing can continue up to 4 weeks.

If you are concerned, please contact the  
Emergency Department you first attended:

**Mercy University  
Hospital**  
(021) 4271971

**M-UCC  
(St. Mary's  
Health  
Campus)**  
(021) 4926900

**CUH**  
(021) 4920200

**Local Injury Unit  
Mallow General  
Hospital**  
(022) 58506

**Local Injury Unit  
Bantry General  
Hospital**  
(027) 52900





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### Diagnosis

Bronchiolitis is diagnosed by the symptoms and examination. Blood tests, chest x-rays and nose swabs are not usually needed.

### Treatment

- Most babies do not need to be admitted to hospital and will recover at home
- Babies are admitted to hospital if they need oxygen or are dehydrated
- Medicines such as steroids, nebulisers, inhalers or antibiotics do not help

### Care at home

- Give breastfeeds or smaller formula feeds more frequently. This provides an adequate feed without tiring your baby
- Saline nose drops can assist in clearing a blocked nose. This is best done before feeds

### Special precautions

- The virus is contagious for the first few days
- Your child can return to crèche once symptoms have resolved or after 1 week

### Red flags:

#### Seek urgent medical attention if:

- Your baby is feeding less than half the usual amount with reduced wet nappies
- Your baby's breathing difficulties are worsening
- Your baby becomes pale, limp or blue

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