CHILDREN'S HEALTH MATTERS

NHS

What to do if your child is unwell

We know it's worrying when your child is unwell

Fortunately, you can treat most illnesses at home with expert advice from this booklet and your home health kit essentials.

Dr. Sooraj Natarajan, System Clinical lead for Children and Young people in Mid and South Essex.

Use this QR code to sign up for our **FREE newsletter** with information on services and tools to support family health and wellbeing in Essex

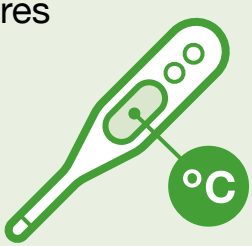
Your community pharmacist is there to help you

Getting advice from a local pharmacist is often the best first step for a minor health concern. You do not need an appointment to see a pharmacist and they can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses.

Find out more at: midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/health/choose-well/local-pharmacy-information

Your home health kit essentials

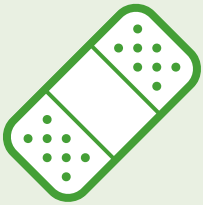
Thermometer
to check temperatures



Child's paracetamol
for a temperature and pain relief

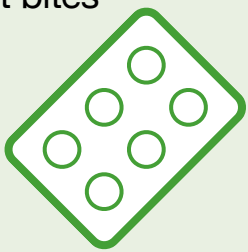
Antiseptic cream
to keep germs out of cuts

Plasters
to protect cuts and scratches



Olive oil
to use as ear drops for wax in the ear

Antihistamines
for hayfever, allergies and insect bites



What to do if your child has a cough, cold or virus

Coughs, colds, or viruses are common among young children and may result in your child experiencing breathing difficulties.

Treat at home

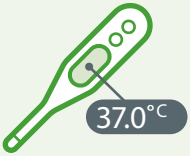
Don't worry; it can take 2-3 weeks for children to get better. Treat your child at home if they are:

Taking in more than half of normal feeds

&

Making wet nappies

or



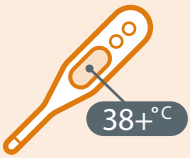
Their high temperature improves with Paracetamol and lasts less than 5 days.

Call 111

If symptoms get worse, then it's time to ask for help. Call 111 or your GP surgery if your child is:

Taking in less than half of normal feeds

or



Their temperature is higher than 38 ˚C and lasts more than 5 days.

Visit A&E

The Emergency Department is for life-threatening symptoms. Call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency when your child has:

Long pauses between breathing

or

Severe difficulties or is gasping for breath

or

Their tongue or lips go blue on white skin, or grey or white on brown or black skin.

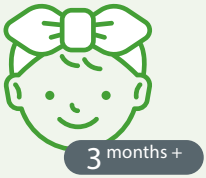
If you're worried your child has coronavirus, visit the NHS website for advice: **nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/coronavirus-in-children/**

What to do if your child has a fever

Children often get fevers when their bodies are fighting infections. If they are not upset, there is no need to worry.

Treat at home

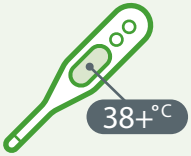
Treat them at home with paracetamol if:



Your child is older than 3 months

(following the age recommended dose on the packaging)

&



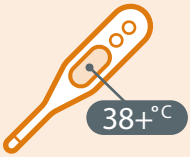
Their high temperature improves with paracetamol and lasts less than 5 days.

Call 111

If symptoms get worse, then it's time to ask for help. Call 111 or your GP surgery if:

Your child is less than 3 months old

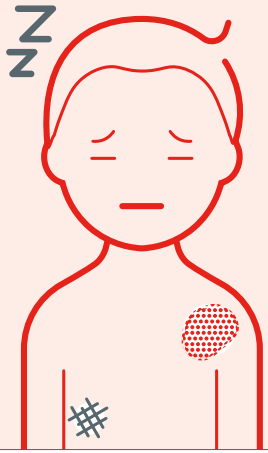
or



Their temperature is higher than 38 ˚C and lasts more than 5 days.

Visit A&E

The Emergency Department is for life-threatening symptoms. Only call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency if your child's fever also includes:



Blue or blotchy skin

or

Very fast breathing

or

A rash that doesn't disappear when pressed

or

A fit or seizure

or

They are very sleepy and difficult to wake up.

What to do if your child has vomiting and/or diarrhoea

These symptoms are very common in children and are usually because of a ‘tummy bug’. Vomiting will normally stop in 1-2 days and diarrhoea in 5-7 days.

Treat at home

Keep your child at home and encourage:

Regular small sips of drink

Eating when they can

Smaller amounts of food more often or using a different feeding position, if needed.

Call 111

If symptoms get worse or last longer than expected, then it's time to ask for help. Call 111 or your GP surgery if your child has:

Not passed urine in 12-18 hours

or

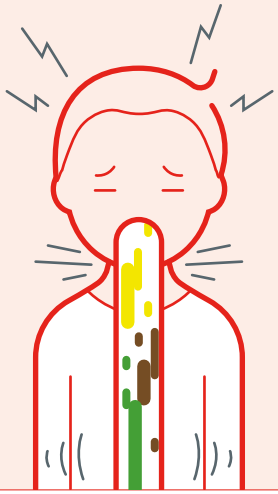
Blood in their diarrhoea or it lasts 7+ days

or

Been vomiting for more than 2 days.

Visit A&E

The Emergency Department is for life-threatening symptoms. Only call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency if your child has:



Bright yellow, green or brown vomit

or

Blood in their vomit

or

Swallowed something poisonous

or

A stiff neck and pain when looking at a bright light

or

A sudden severe headache or stomach pain.

What to do if your child has a head injury

Children often bump their heads. Afterwards, it is normal for them to have a slight headache, feel sick for a couple of days, or be a little sleepy.

Treat at home

Monitor your child at home for 24 hours for any change in symptoms. Treat with:

An ice-pack on the injury for short intervals

(e.g. 10 minutes, once an hour)

Paracetamol

(following the age recommended dose on the packaging)

Rest and avoid rough play and sports.

Call 111

If symptoms get worse or last longer than two weeks, then it's time to ask for help. Call 111 as your first point of contact if your child has:

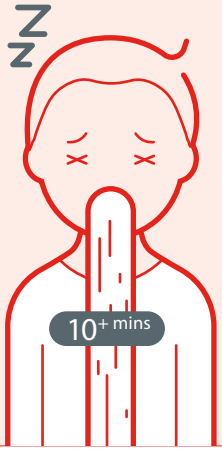
Developed a persistent headache that doesn't go away (despite being given paracetamol)

or

Developed a worsening headache.

Visit A&E

The Emergency Department is for life-threatening symptoms. Only call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency if your child:



Was knocked unconscious

or

Vomits repeatedly i.e. more than twice (within 10 minutes between each vomit)

or

Shows a significant change in behaviour, for example, restlessness or memory problems.

What to do if your child has a sore throat

Sore throats are common in childhood and are usually nothing to worry about. Sometimes a child's tonsils, found at the back of their mouth, will become swollen and painful. This is a common childhood illness called tonsillitis.

Treat at home

Sore throats usually gets better on their own after a few days. Treat by:

Giving your child paracetamol or ibuprofen to help relieve pain

Encouraging your child to drink plenty of fluids.

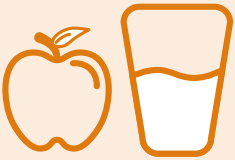
You can buy a throat spay which may help with pain. Speak to your local pharmacist

Call 111

If symptoms get worse, then it's time to ask for help. Call 111 or your GP surgery if:

Your child has white pus-filled spots in their throat

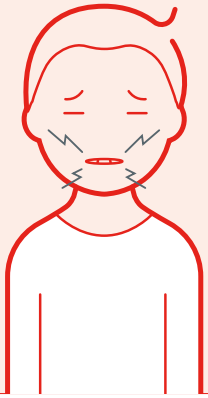
or



Their sore throat is so painful it's difficult to eat or drink.

Visit A&E

The Emergency Department is for life-threatening symptoms. Only call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency if your child's throat is so swollen and/or painful that it's difficult for them to:



Speak

or

Swallow

or

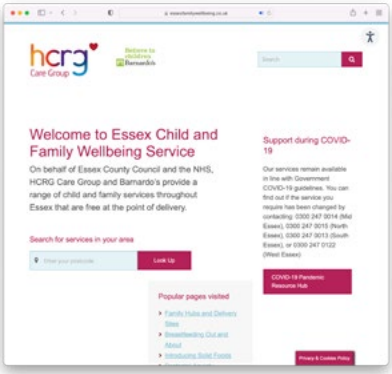
Open their mouth

or

Breathe

Further information

Use the links below from the Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership to access further advice on child health:

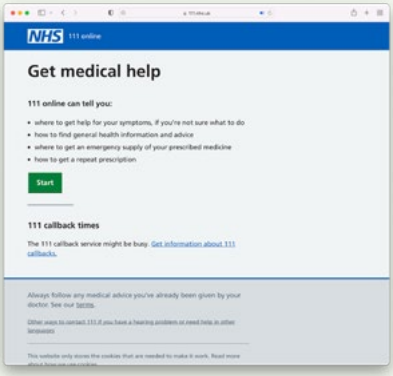


Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/

Southend Health Visitors and School Nurses Service

southend.gov.uk/homepage/391/health-visitors-and-school-nurses



Thurrock 0-19 Brighter Futures Healthy Families service & Children's Centres

nelft.nhs.uk/services-thurrock-brighter-futures-healthy-families/

For urgent or long-lasting medical problems, the NHS 111 service provides:

- Access to local healthcare services
- Medication options
- Scheduling of face-to-face appointments
- Guidance on when to access the emergency services.

Their online services also provide advice for children over 5. Go to **111.nhs.uk**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH MATTERS

Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System

The Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) is a partnership of local health and care services across mid and south Essex.

midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk