



Mid and South Essex  
Integrated Care  
System



# What to do if your child is unwell



Treat at  
home?

Call  
111?

Visit  
A&E?

**CHILDREN'S  
HEALTH  
MATTERS**

# 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.

## 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.



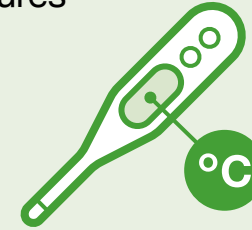
They may also be able to offer treatment and some prescription medicine for some conditions, without you needing to see a doctor (this is called Pharmacy First). Conditions pharmacists can treat as part of Pharmacy First are:

- earache (aged 1 to 17 years)
- impetigo (aged 1 year and over)
- infected insect bites (aged 1 year and over)
- sinusitis (aged 12 years and over)
- sore throat (aged 5 years and over)

Find out more at: [midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/health/support/local-pharmacy-information/](https://midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk/health/support/local-pharmacy-information/)

## Your home health kit essentials

**Thermometer**  
to check temperatures



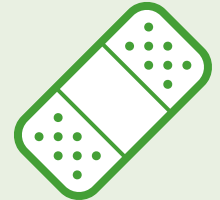
**Child's paracetamol**  
for a temperature and pain relief



**Antiseptic cream**  
to keep germs out of cuts



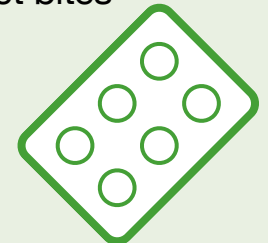
**Plasters**  
to protect cuts and scratches



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



**Antihistamines**  
for hayfever, allergies and insect bites



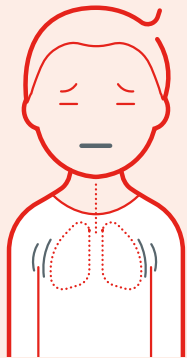
# Sepsis

**Sepsis** is a life-threatening reaction to an infection.

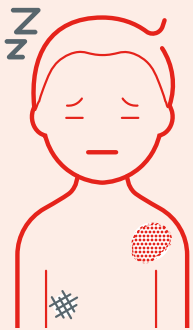
It happens when your immune system overreacts to an infection and starts to damage your body's own tissues and organs.

Visit A&E

Call 999 or go to Accident & Emergency when your child:



- 1 Is **breathless**, breathing **very fast** or **struggling to breathe**
- 2 Has a **'fit'** or **convulsion**
- 3 Looks **mottled, bluish** or **blue**. on brown or black skin, this may be easier to see on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.



- 4 Has a **rash** that does not fade when you press it
- 5 Is very **lethargic** or difficult to wake, is acting **confused**, isn't making sense or has **slurred speech**
- 6 Feels **abnormally cold** to touch.

Call 111

Call 111 or your GP surgery if your child is:



Is not **feeding**

or



Is **vomiting** repeatedly

or



Hasn't had a **wee** or **wet nappy** for 12 hours

or



Has swelling or pain around a cut or wound

or



Has a very **high** or **low temperature**, feels hot or cold to the touch, or is shivering.

Do not worry if you're not sure if it's sepsis – it's still best to call 111.

They can tell you what to do, arrange a phone call from a nurse or doctor, or call you an ambulance.

## 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:



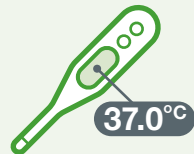
Taking in more than half of normal feeds

&



Making wet nappies

or



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

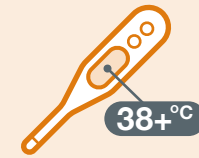
### Call 111

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/](https://www.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.

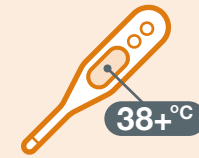
## Call 111

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.

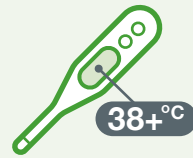
## Treat at home

Treat them at home with paracetamol if:



Your child is older than 2 months (following the age recommended dose on the packaging)

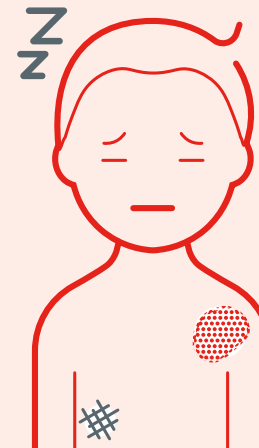
&



Their high temperature improves with paracetamol and lasts less 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.

## 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:



12-18+ hrs  
Not passed urine in 12-18 hours

or



or 7+ days  
Blood in their diarrhoea or it lasts 7+ days

or



2+ days  
Been vomiting for more than 2 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.

## 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:



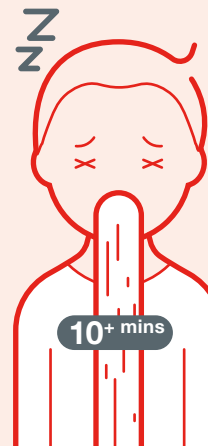
Developed a persistent headache that doesn't go away (despite being given paracetamol)

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.



### 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.

### 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 spray which may help with pain. Speak to your local pharmacist

### 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

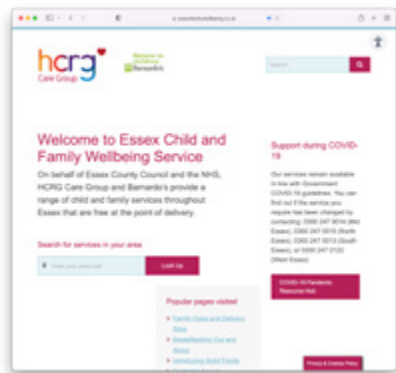
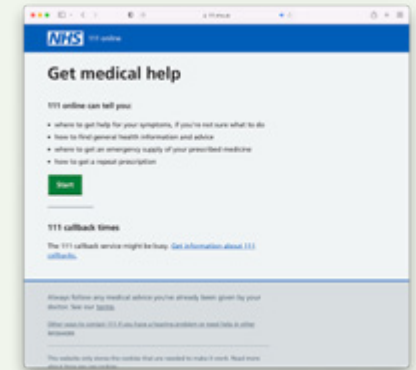
or

Breathe



## Further information

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



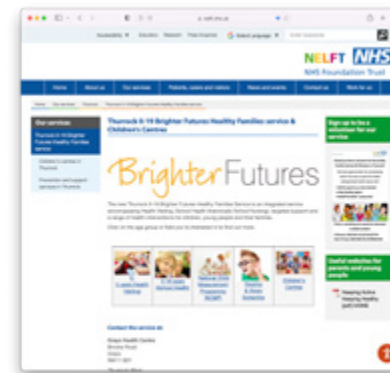
### Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service

[essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/](http://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/)



### Southend Health Visitors and School Nurses Service

[southend.gov.uk/homepage/391/health-visitors-and-school-nurses](http://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/](http://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](http://111.nhs.uk)

# CHILDREN'S HEALTH MATTERS



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



Treat at home?

Call 111?

Visit A&E?

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](https://midandsouthessex.ics.nhs.uk)