



Children's Community Nursing Team

Care of a Child with a Chest Infection

Information for parents and carers

Introduction

If your child needs antibiotics via an intravenous cannula then please refer to guidelines on Home Peripheral Intravenous Therapy. Do not hesitate to contact the nurse at any time if you have any concerns.

It is important that you:

- Keep regular checks on your child's breathing to make sure it does not get any worse and allow your child to rest.
- Keep a regular check on their temperature with your own thermometer
- If your child's temperature is 38°C or above, keep them cool, remove any excess clothing. Give paracetamol or Ibuprofen. Follow the instructions on bottle, not exceeding maximum doses recommended.
- Ensure you give your child their antibiotics, if they have been prescribed any. Make sure they are given at the right time and that your child completes the full course.
- Give your child plenty of fluids. They may be reluctant to eat when they have a chest infection, this is normal, and they may vomit but it is very important to make sure they get plenty to drink to stop them becoming dehydrated. If your child is reluctant to drink then give them smaller amounts of fluid more frequently.

What to look for when checking on your child's condition.

Here are some signs to look out for, as they can indicate your child is getting worse :

- Your child is breathing faster and they may be too breathless to speak, babble or feed.
- Your child is making more effort to breath, using their " tummy muscles " the muscles of the neck may appear to be moving when your child breathes in. This can also be seen under the rib cage or even the muscles between the ribs.
- Has noisy breathing or is grunting.
- If your child's temperature is 38 °c or above and it does not come down 45 minutes after paracetamol or Ibuprofen have been given.
- Your child has prolonged and/or more frequent coughing spells.
- Your child becomes very pale (sometimes with cold hands or feet.)
- Your child becomes unsettled, agitated or irritable or is becoming more tired and lethargic.



- Your child starts to vomit.
- Your child is refusing all drinks for four hours or more and/or has not passed urine for eight hours or more (during the day)

If your child has the above symptoms and have become worse since they were last seen by the nurse you must contact us immediately.

You must ring 999 for an ambulance and bring your child to the hospital if your child:

- Is having severe breathing difficulties
- Becomes very blue/grey around the lips.
- Becomes very drowsy or difficult to wake up.
- Has a convulsion/fit.
- Loses consciousness



It would help us in your child's care if you could write down some information:

- The temperature of your child and the time it was taken.
- The time any medication is given and how much was given.
- The amount of fluids they have had, and at what times
- If your child has vomited, and how much.
- If your child has prolonged coughing spells, how long for, and at what time.
- Any changes you note in your child's condition.

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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