



Respiratory Department

Viral Induced Wheeze

Information for parents of children under 2 years

What is viral induced wheeze?

Some children cough, wheeze, get breathless or have a rattly chest during or after a cold.

A wheezy episode during or after a cold is called **viral induced wheeze**. It does not mean that your child has asthma.

Children with **viral induced wheeze** may:

- Have a runny nose or a raised temperature.
- Have a cough for a long time (may last several weeks)
- Vomit their feeds
- Become too tired or breathless to take their normal feeds (may last several days)

Most children recover quite quickly and don't need any medical treatment.

What can I do to help my child?

- Your child will need rest (disturb them as little as possible).
- Keep an eye on their breathing to check it doesn't get worse.
- Offer small amounts of feed at regular intervals.
- Raise the head of the cot slightly to help your child's breathing.
- Give Paracetamol, if they have a raised temperature. Do not exceed the recommended dose for your child's age.

What if my child gets worse?

If your child is:

- Coughing or wheezing more than before
- Becoming more breathless
- Waking up in the night with chesty symptoms

You **must** be seen by a doctor today - Your child may need further treatment.

If your GP surgery is closed, please ring the GP emergency number for advice, or attend your local walk-in centre.

When should I seek help urgently?

If your child is:

- Breathing faster than usual and using their tummy muscles to breathe
- Having difficulty babbling, speaking or unable to feed
- Tired, pale or blue around the lips

YOU MUST SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY: DIAL 999

Is there any treatment that can be given?

An inhaler may help, but only for some children who are older than 6 months. Your doctor will check your child's symptoms to see if an inhaler is right for them.

If you are given an inhaler, this will contain Salbutamol, which may help with their breathing. Use the inhaler with the 'spacer' provided. Your doctor or nurse will show you how to do this.

- Give your child 2 puffs of inhaler if they are coughing, wheezing, breathless or have a rattly chest.
- Give 2 puffs every 4-6 hours while they are unwell.
- Give the inhaler less often as they get better, then stop it when they are well.

What if my child gets worse and the inhaler is not helping?

If your child is getting worse and needing their inhaler more often:

- Give up to 5 puffs every 4-6 hours.

Your child **must** be seen by a doctor today - they may need further treatment.

If your GP surgery is closed, please ring the GP emergency number for advice, or attend your local walk-in centre.

If your child is:

- Breathing faster than usual and using their tummy muscles to breathe
- Having difficulty babbling, speaking or unable to feed
- Tired, pale or blue around the lips

YOU MUST SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY: DIAL 999

Whilst you are waiting for the ambulance:

- Give your child 10 puffs (1 puff every 30 seconds) of the inhaler using the spacer.
- Then continue to give 1 puff every minute until help arrives.

In the future:

What should I do if my child gets wheezy again?

- Give your child their inhaler: 2 puffs every 4-6 hours, when they become wheezy
- Make an appointment to see your GP. Your child may need further treatment if they get wheezy again.

Care of your spacer device

Clean your 'Volumatic' spacer monthly. Use washing up liquid and allow it to dry in air without rinsing. Wipe the mouth piece clean before use. The mask can be removed and washed more often.

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.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust
Eaton Road

Liverpool
L12 2AP

Tel: 0151 228 4811

www.alderhey.nhs.uk

