



# Winter Illness

## WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK

This factsheet explains what to do if your child is sick.

### SYMPTOMS

- Cough
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Fatigue/tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea

### REMEMBER

- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly and often, to stop the spread of illness.
- Call your doctor to make an appointment, rather than just turning up.
- **Your hospital emergency department is a busy place in winter. Please save it for emergencies only.**

### FOR MORE ADVICE

Call Healthline: 0800 611 116  
A free, 24/7 service with interpreters available

Visit: [kidshealth.org.nz](https://kidshealth.org.nz) | [COVID19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)

**Te Whatu Ora**  
Health New Zealand

Capital, Coast, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa

V2 | Updated March 2023

Source: [kidshealth.org.nz](https://kidshealth.org.nz) | Auckland Regional Public Health Service

### WHAT TO DO

Most children fight off the infection by themselves and fever is a normal part of this.

If your child is miserable due to fever or aches and pains, you can give paracetamol to make them more comfortable. Follow the dosage instructions on the bottle. It is dangerous to give more than the recommended dose.

Cough and runny or stuffy nose by themselves are not serious.

Give your child regular fluids, and keep them at home and resting. Keep them away from others until they are well to stop the spread.

See your doctor if your child has flu-like symptoms and:

- is less than 3 months old with a fever
- has a long-lasting (chronic) condition such as heart disease, cysticfibrosis or other lung condition, asthma, diabetes, an organ transplant, cancer or leukaemia
- is 3 years or older, has a sore throat and is Māori or Pasifika. They need a swab for strep throat and treatment if positive
- doesn't seem to be improving.

See your doctor **URGENTLY** if your child of any age:

- is drinking less than half of their normal breastmilk or other fluid
- is having fewer than 4 wet nappies in 24 hours
- is severely irritable and is not wanting to be held
- has trouble breathing, has noisy breathing or is breathing fast
- looks very unwell and you are concerned
- has tummy pain, vomiting or diarrhoea and seems sicker than you would expect.

Dial 111 for urgent medical help if your child:

- has blue lips and tongue
- has severe difficulty breathing
- has any episodes of irregular or stopping breathing
- has a worrying rash especially one that does not go away when you press on it
- is unconscious or you can't wake them up properly.

Your child needs a COVID-19 test:

- if they are a household contact. Test daily for 5 days with a rapid antigen test (RAT) from the day the person with COVID-19 tested positive.

Please contact Healthline on 0800 611 116 for advice.