Bronchiolitis

Bronchiolitis is an inflammation of the *bronchioles* (smallest airways in the lungs). It usually affects children under the age of 2 years old. It may cause cold symptoms in older children and adults who are exposed. The most common cause of this condition is a virus infection called *respiratory syncytial virus* (RSV). Symptoms include coughing, wheezing, breathing difficulty and fever. Bronchiolitis is contagious. A nasal swab test may be used to confirm the presence of RSV.

The treatment of bronchiolitis is mostly supportive. This includes:

- Having your child rest as much as possible.
- Giving your child plenty of clear liquids (water and fruit juices). If your child is an infant, continue to give regular feedings.
- Using a cool mist humidifier in your child's room to moisten the air. **Do not** use hot steam.
- Using saline nose drops frequently to keep the nose open from secretions. It works better than suctioning with the bulb syringe, which can cause minor bruising inside the child's nose.
- Keeping your child away from smoke.
- Avoiding cough and cold medicines for children younger than 6 years of age.
- Leaning exactly how to give medicine for discomfort or fever. **Do not give aspirin to children under 18 years of age.**

This condition usually clears up completely in 1 to 2 weeks. See your caregiver if your child is not improving after 2 days of treatment.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child is older than 3 months with a rectal or oral temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- Your child has a hard time breathing.
- Your child gets too tired to eat or breathe well.
- Your child gets fussier and will not eat.
- Your child looks and acts sicker.
- Your child has bluish lips.

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