



# MANAGING EVERYDAY CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

## Advisors Aid:

The advice is aimed at parents with children from 6months to 5 years.

### AIM:

- To empower and enable parents so that they feel happier managing everyday illness as home.

### SET UP:

- You will need the flash cards and visual aids included in this aid. Make sure the room is comfortable.
- Make sure you have enough parent information leaflets printed to give out at the end. You may need to explain that the QR codes on the advice sheet require a code reader app on a smart phone. They take you to a video clip on each of the illnesses.

### PARENT GROUP:

- The session works best in groups of 3-12 parents.
- You will need a colleague on hand to look after the children. The session is easiest to run when the children are occupied such as their break time.
- The whole session should take about 30mins or so depending on how chatty the group are.

### TIPS:

- Do spend time talking about how the parents might feel i.e. panicky and stressed and how they might manage this. They should trust their inner 'alarm bells' and if worried should speak to their GP, health visitor or 111.
- If there are questions that you do not feel you can answer, be honest; 'I am not a health care worker and do not know the answer, however if you are worried about your child then you should seek medical help' Allow people to speak and acknowledge their feelings ( " that must have been very difficult for you.... " etc) but do not get drawn into a medical conversation; e.g: "without all the information it is impossible to comment ; let's try and move on "



- Although the focus is not on hygiene, this is an opportunity to mention that good hand washing can help stop the spread of viruses. You may come across cultural practices among some ethnic groups such as yogurt and cumin for diarrhoea or dill water (gripe water) for vomiting. Most of these are not harmful, however please let your Team Lead know if you are concerned.
- When you have completed going through the 3 illnesses, spend a bit of time asking the group again 'what do you do if your child has loose poo and vomiting /cough and cold/ fever?' This gives you a chance to assess how much the group has understood.
- Give the parent information leaflets out at the end of the session.

### Signposting:

- Most of these illnesses can be managed at home. If a doctor is required, in the majority of cases the GP and out of hours GP will be adequate.
- Advise to use 111 if they are unsure of who to call. [www.NHS.uk](http://www.NHS.uk) has lots of useful information on different illness.
- The emergency department and 999 should only be used in emergencies

### References:

- Map of medicine
- NICE guidelines on feverish illness in children
- RCPCH Clinical guideline on feverish illness in children



## Diarrhoea and Vomiting.



Start by asking 'what do you do if your child has loose poo and is vomiting?'

You can use the flash cards to have a more interactive session.

Answers from parents might be something like 'drink plenty' 'see a doctor' or 'starve them'. You can ask when they would take their child to the doctor.

Your response should be guided by what they say but the important points to cover are:

- State that's its common, usually caused by a virus and can last 5-7 days.
- Discuss practical things such as good hygiene and having a bucket just for sick.
- Explain how important rehydration is. If a child is admitted to hospital, the parents are asked to give 5mls of fluid every 10 mins or so from a syringe.
  - Advise clear drinks, rehydration solution, normal breast feeds, avoid fizzy drinks.
  - All fluids should be given in small amounts, but frequently- 'little and often'. Large amounts of fluid may make the child vomit.
  - If the diarrhoea and vomiting lasts longer than 48 hours they should use rehydration solution so that their child has enough sugar and salt on board.
  - They do not need to starve their child, they will eat if they want.
- When to take your child to see a doctor:
  - Passing very little urine
  - No tears when crying
  - Difficulty in waking their child
  - Sunken eyes
  - Very dry tongue or lips
  - Blood in the poo or vomit



The D and V flash cards can be used in different ways such as:

- Parents (or children) picking a card from a hat or box and reading it for the group with discussion after.
- Cards handed round at the beginning and parents reading from them with discussion after them.

Be on hand to help with parents with poor reading skills.

Please cut each one out separately along the dotted line.

Common



Usually caused by a VIRUS

Can last 5-7 days



Hand washing



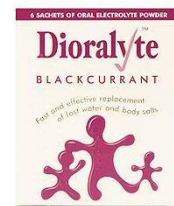
Sick bucket



FLUIDS!!! Little and often



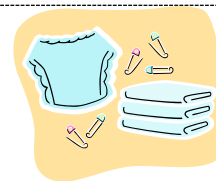
Rehydration Salts



When to see a doctor.....??



Passing little urine





Blood in poo or vomit



Your child is difficult to wake or not responding normally to you.



No tears when crying



## Fever



Start by asking 'what do you do if your child has a fever?'

Try using the flash cards to make the session more interactive.

Answers from parents may be 'give paracetamol' or 'strip them off'. You can ask them about what they consider a normal temperature to be.

Your response should be guided by what they say but the important points are:

- Fever is common in children, they are usually mild, caused by a virus and should pass within 5 days
- A normal temperature is between 36.5 and 37.5 degrees centigrade.
- ALL children under 6 months with a temperature over 38 degrees should see a doctor.
- At-home management: offer plenty of fluid, give children's paracetamol and ibuprofen for their child's comfort.
  - They may ask if you can give paracetamol and ibuprofen together, advise that they should always follow the directions on the bottle.
  - Paracetamol and Ibuprofen may take over 30mins to take effect.
- They shouldn't sponge their child down.
- They should keep their child in loose clothing and not over wrap them.
- When to take to the doctor
  - If their child does not respond normally to them or is difficult to wake
  - If the fever is associated with a rash that doesn't go away on pressing (glass test).
    - *The glass test: press a clear glass tumbler firmly against the rash. If you can see the marks clearly through the glass seek urgent medical help immediately.*
  - If their child has a fit
  - If the temperature lasts longer than 5 days



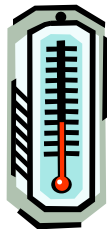
The fever flash cards can be handed round at the start and you can encourage the parents to read from them and discuss the material. Be on hand to help parents with poor reading skills. Cut each one out and fold along the dotted line with the question outfacing.

Question: What is normal temperature?

Answer: 36.5 - 37.5 (degrees Celsius)

Question: How do you measure a temperature?

Answer: a thermometer under the arm or in



the ear.

Forehead thermometers can be inaccurate.





Question: what usually causes a fever?

Answer: A VIRUS!!



Fever is common in children and usually mild



## Question:

What can you do/ give your child when they have a fever?



---

## Answer:

1. Fluids! Keep your child hydrated
2. Give paracetamol and Ibuprofen
3. Keep your child in loose clothing
4. Don't sponge down



Question: when should you take your child to the doctor



Answer:

1. If your child does not respond normally to them or is difficult to wake
2. If the fever is associated with a rash that doesn't go away on pressing (glass test).
3. If your child has a fit
4. If the temperature lasts longer than 5 days

ALL CHILDREN UNDER 6 MONTHS OLD WITH A TEMPERATURE OF 38 DEGREES OR HIGHER NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR.



Question: What is the glass test?

Answer: *The glass test: press a clear glass tumbler firmly against the rash. If you can see the marks clearly through the glass seek urgent medical help immediately.*





## Cough and Cold

Start by asking 'what do you do if your child has a cough and cold?'

Try using the true/ false flash cards to make the session more interactive.

Answers may be 'vicks or vapour rub' or 'see a doctor'. You can ask them about what would make them worried and take their child to the doctor.

Your response should be guided by what they say, but the main points to cover are:

- Coughs and colds are very common in children, they are usually caused by a virus and are often mild.
- Coughs and colds can take up to 2 weeks to resolve and may often run back to back. A cough may sometimes take 3-4 weeks to go completely.
- Offer plenty of fluid. Children's paracetamol and ibuprofen may make the child more comfortable
- When to see a doctor:
  - If their child is wheezy or struggling to breathe
  - If their child does not respond normally
  - After 7 days of a cold the child should be getting better, if they are getting worse they should be seen by a doctor.



Cough and cold flash cards are for a true/false game. Hand them out or hold them up and do a 'show of hands' true or false game. Make sure you allow time to discuss around each card. Be on hand to help parents with poor reading skills.

1. true
2. False- very contagious!
3. True,
4. False- both will make their children feel better
5. False- can take up to 4 weeks to resolve
- 6-9. all true

### 1. True or false?

Coughs and colds are usually caused by

a virus?



2. True or false? Coughs and colds are not contagious


3. True or false? Coughs and colds are usually mild


4. True or false? Paracetamol and Ibuprofen won't help Coughs and colds







5. True or false? Coughs and colds will take 1 week to resolve

6.  True or false? You should see a doctor when your child is wheezy

7.  True or false? You should see a doctor urgently if your child is struggling to breathe

8.  True or false? You should see a doctor if your child does not respond normally to you.

9.  True or false? You should see a doctor if after 7 days your child is getting worse.