⚠ Warning

This cheat sheet is intended only as an informative aid for parents of children with bronchiolitis.

It should not be used for diagnosis and does not provide medical advice.

If in any doubt about the health of your child, please seek professional medical assistance.

What is Bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a viral infection of the lungs

It usually occurs in children under 2 and is most common during winter

It can be caused by several viruses, usually RSV but also metapneumovirus, influenza, parainfluenza, coronavirus, adenovirus, and rhinovirus

Treatment usually consists of support while the child deals with the virus

Usually improves within a week, leaving a residual cough

In 90% of cases it is completely cleared within 2-3 weeks

Signs and Symptoms

Initial symptoms are like a common cold for the first couple of days

- Runny nose
- Mild cough

Breathing then usually becomes more difficult

- Drawing in under the ribcage
- head bobbing while breathing
- Nostrils flair while breathing
- Wheezing

Other symptoms may include

- Pale or blueish skin
- Poor feeding
- Fast feeding
- Worsening Cough
- Fever

How Does Bronchiolitis Make Breathing Difficult?

The **bronchioles** are some of the smaller airways in the lungs

The viral infection causes an inflamation of the bronchioles, making it harder to breathe

It also causes sticky mucus to be released, which can also make the bronchioles harder to inflate

Adults have larger airways and greater lung strength, so are not affected by the viruses in the same way

Notes

The virus is spread to infants by coming into direct contact with nose and throat fluids of someone who has the illness. This can happen when another child or an adult who has a virus:
Sneezes or coughs nearby and tiny droplets in the air are then breathed in by the infant
Touches toys or other objects that are then touched by the infant



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