


**EVEN WHEN YOUR SURGERY  
IS CLOSED YOU ALWAYS  
HAVE ACCESS TO GP SERVICES,  
24 HOURS A DAY,  
7 DAYS A WEEK**



**GP 24/7**



**NHS**  
**Bristol**



**24/7**

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The GP will be able to assess the seriousness of your child's condition and often prevent a stressful and unnecessary trip to a hospital's emergency department. Please remember to use your GP as your first point of contact and help us ensure that emergency departments are used for emergencies only.

The following information gives you help and advice in recognising and dealing with 3 common childhood ailments.

**NHS**  
*Bristol*

When it comes to your child's health, it is better to be safe than sorry. We want the best care for our children as early as possible when they are ill or injured.

**EXPERTS AT DEALING WITH CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES AND ARE AWARE AND WILL RECOGNISE IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS EMERGENCY ATTENTION. WE OFFER A 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK SERVICE. WHEN YOUR PRACTICE IS CLOSED YOU CAN ACCESS THE GP OUT OF HOURS SERVICE BY CALLING YOUR USUAL PRACTICE NUMBER.**

**Childhood rashes:** It's worrying for parents when a child develops a rash but most rashes are due to simple viral infections and will dissolve spontaneously. The other main reason for developing a rash is an allergic reaction, or skin condition such as eczema. Most of the childhood infectious diseases that are linked with rashes can usually be dealt with without the need for any specific medical treatment. But if your child remains unwell then it is a good idea to get a GP opinion.

## What to look for

Identifying the differences between a harmless or dangerous rash is not always easy but recognising the symptoms will help you to evaluate your child's medical needs. If your child has an infectious disease, the chances are they will also have a fever (a temperature over 37.5C). The following infectious diseases that come with a rash are the most common:

## Measles

Brownish-red spots that start at the hairline and spread down the body to the legs.

## Scarlet fever

Tiny bright red spots that spread from behind the ears, then merge all over the body. It lasts for about a week.



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## Chickenpox

Appear after two to three weeks' incubation, following contact with an active case. Crops of intensely itchy spots that are larger than most develop, usually on the trunk of the body at first. They then spread to the face, arms and legs. The spots fill with fluid, and then crust over.

## Rubella

Pink spots appear behind the ears, then spread to the forehead, trunk and limbs.

## Meningitis

Rash appears on the trunk of the body. This spotty rash does not fade when pressed with a glass.

## What action to take

The first thing to do with any rash is try the 'tumbler test' to exclude meningococcal infection (meningitis). Firmly press a glass against the rash and if the rash does not fade, but remains visible through the glass, there is a chance it is meningococcal septicaemia. Contact your doctor or an ambulance urgently.

If your child's face and mouth swell up, an allergic reaction could be the cause: call 999 for an ambulance.

Also call an ambulance at once if your child develops any of the following symptoms:

- Noisy or difficult breathing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Abnormal drowsiness

As long as you don't spot any of the above symptoms, you can assume that your child's condition is not a medical emergency. But it is still a good idea to consult your GP for a diagnosis.

Most of the childhood infectious diseases that are linked with rashes can usually be dealt with without the need for any specific medical treatment. But it's always best to get your GP's opinion if your child has a rash with fever.

**Childhood fever:** Children frequently develop fevers, usually due to viral infections that clear up without treatment. But a fever can occasionally be a sign of a more serious illness, such as severe bacterial infection, urinary tract infection, pneumonia, and meningitis.

## What to look for

If your child has a fever, he or she will have a body temperature above 37.5°C on two recordings taken at least two hours apart. As well as having a high temperature, your child may also be:

- clammy
- sweaty
- irritable and crying
- flushed
- tired

Your child may also complain of a headache or aches and pains. A rapidly rising fever may cause shivering and febrile convulsions (seizures) in young children.

## What action to take

You can manage your child's temperature by taking the following actions;

- Remove your child's clothing down to their nappy or underwear
- Give regular doses of paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Give your child water to maintain fluid levels
- Sponge your child with tepid water or gently fan
- Lower the room temperature
- Monitor their temperature at regular intervals
- Most viral infection symptoms subside with 48 hours



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In most cases, your child's fever will be due to a viral infection and will get better within a day. However, you should contact your GP immediately or go to hospital if your child:

- is unusually sleepy
- has a rash which is still visible when pressed with a glass
- has a stiff neck
- has difficulty breathing
- has one or multiple febrile convulsions

It can be hard for you to know when to call your GP or out-of-hours service. Generally, trust your instincts and contact your GP 24/7 for medical advice if you suspect something serious or if you're in any doubt.

**Childhood head injury:** Young children often bump their heads accidentally particularly when they are toddlers. Most will result in minor bumps, bruises, or cuts but no serious damage. Sometimes more serious head injuries such as a concussion can occur. Head injuries are rarely more serious than a concussion, however, a direct blow to the skull can cause damage to the skull or brain.

## What to look for

It is important that you monitor your child closely in the hours/days following a head injury as some injuries that initially appear to be minor may develop into more serious cases.

If your child loses consciousness (even if momentarily) take them straight to your nearest emergency department. Call your GP 24/7 for advice if your child displays any of the following symptoms:

- won't stop crying despite being comforted
- is irritable
- is demonstrating unusual behaviour (this may indicate concussion)
- complains of head and neck pain
- is feeling sick or dizzy or is in pain

## What action to take

If your child loses consciousness even momentarily take them straight to your nearest Emergency Department. If your child displays any of the symptoms above following a head injury Call GP 24/7 for advice.

- use an icepack to reduce any swelling (a pack of peas will do). Always make sure to wrap up the ice as ice applied directly to the skin can be painful and cause frostbite.
- if bleeding occurs place a clean dressing over the wound and gently press for a few minutes until the bleeding stops and then secure the dressing in place using tape or a light bandage.

- Observe your child carefully for the next 24 hours. If you notice any of the symptoms outlined above, call your GP immediately.
- If the incident has occurred close to bedtime or naptime and your child falls asleep soon afterward, check in every few hours to look for twitching limbs or disturbances in colour or breathing.

Call an ambulance if any of the following symptoms occur after your child has knocked their head;

- your child vomits
- loses consciousness for any amount of time
- has a visible severe wound or an abnormal dent in the scalp
- has a convulsion
- does not respond to sound or touch
- has clear fluid leaking from their ear or nose
- has blood in the whites of their eye(s)

# GP 24/7

## GP, Walk-in Centre, Pharmacy, A&E?

The checklist below will help you decide which health service you should use depending on your medical issue.

For: unconsciousness, severe chest pain or suspected stroke, call 999. For burns, heavy blood loss, broken bones or difficulty breathing go straight to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E)

For: sprains and strains, broken bones, minor head injuries, eye infections. Go to Minor Injury Unit, Southmead Hospital.

For: minor cuts, injury or strain, minor infections, skin complaint or rash, burns. Go to Knowle West Health Park or Bristol Walk-in Centre, 33 Broad Street.

For: infections, concerns during pregnancy, health checks, minor illness, flare up of long standing illnesses, skin complaint. Call your GP Surgery.

For: minor ailments including coughs and colds, stomach upsets, aches and pains, sprains, emergency contraception (free for under 25s). Call NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to find your nearest pharmacy.

For: rashes, abdominal pain, dental, tooth and jaw pain. NHS Direct offers expert health advice day and night every day of the year. Call 0845 46 47 or visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

For: everyday illnesses e.g. cold and coughs, sore throat, mild pain. Speak to your pharmacist for advice on the correct medicines to use or go online at [www.selfhelpguide.nhs.uk](http://www.selfhelpguide.nhs.uk)

