



Winter infections in children – guidance for parents/guardians

This leaflet gives advice on illnesses that are currently affecting nursery and school children across the West Midlands

What are the symptoms?

There are two groups of symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting – usually lasting 1-2 days
- Fever, tiredness, runny nose, cough and sore throat – lasting 3-4 days

What should I do if my child is unwell?

- If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms, they should not attend nursery/school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- If your child has a high temperature and is unwell, it is very important they stay at home and don't attend school until they have recovered. Children with mild symptoms like runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend school.
- Ensure they drink plenty of fluids – taking sips rather than gulps, to avoid vomiting
- If they have a fever – give child paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, according to manufacturer's instructions. Your local pharmacist can also advise you about the best treatment for your child
- If your child is unusually sleepy, can't take fluids or has other symptoms, such as an unusual rash, headache or neck stiffness – **seek medical advice immediately**

Infection control advice

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of both of these infections. This applies to the child who is ill and the person caring for them. Hands should be washed using soap and rinsed under running water:

- Before and after caring for the child
- After using the toilet
- Before eating, preparing or handling food
- After cleaning up spills (vomit, diarrhoea or urine)
- Also – keep a separate towel for each family member who has symptoms, and change them regularly
- Dry hands thoroughly

Other control measures:

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, using a tissue if possible – dispose of used tissues immediately and wash hands
- Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and towels at 60°C, using detergent – if possible, wear disposable gloves to handle contaminated items
- Surfaces and touch points (taps, toilet flush handle, door handles) should be cleaned then disinfected with bleach-based cleaner
- Check that your child is up to date with their [NHS vaccinations schedule](#)

For further information, visit [NHS.uk](#) and search for 'respiratory infections' and 'diarrhoea and vomiting'