



Southport and  
Ormskirk Hospital  
NHS Trust

# **ADVICE FOR PARENTS**

## **Coughs & Colds**

Paediatric A&E

This information leaflet is designed for parents to help explain why your child gets many more infections than you. It also explains that an important part of growing up is about *catching infections*, so that your child can become a healthy adult!

## **WHY DO YOUNG CHILDREN GET SO MANY COUGHS & COLDS?**

Because many viruses cause children to have coughs and colds. There are over 200 different viruses. If your child has not met a virus before then he/she is likely to become infected and ill, approximately 8 times per year.

## **WHY DOES MY CHILD GET SO MANY MORE INFECTIONS THAN I DO?**

During pre-school years, frequent infections are most common. The frequency of infections will gradually get less as your child grows and builds up immunity and starts meeting viruses he/she has been infected by before. At this age, they have an immune system which is more geared-up to these frequent infections than older children or adults.

## **IS MY CHILD WEAKENED BY THE COUGHS & COLDS?**

Your child is weaker **while** he/she has the cough and cold. The good part is that this infection is giving your child immunity to **that** virus. This means that when your child next meets **that** virus he/she will not be infected. The exception is chickenpox which lowers immunity for a few weeks **after** infection. However, remember there are over 200 other viruses.

## **WHEN SHOULD I TAKE MY CHILD WITH A COUGH & COLD TO SEE A DOCTOR?**

There are **three** important things to look for. They are your child's:

- **Behaviour** – it is normal for a child with a cold not to eat and to lack energy. See a doctor promptly if your child stops: drinking or walking about.
- **Breathing** – see a doctor promptly if your child has difficulty breathing – **look for increased work of breathing such as sucking in between the ribs or very fast breathing.**
- **Temperature** – see a doctor if your child's temperature persists for more than 4 days.

**Regular Paracetamol and Ibuprofen can help your child.  
Fluids encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids.**

**A&E Telephone: 01695 656674  
NHS 111**

*Please retain this leaflet for future reference*

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

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**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to: [southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT](https://southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT)

**Thank you**

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