

Key points

- Enlarged lymph nodes in children are very common
- Most are caused by minor infections
- Serious causes are rare
- Speak to a healthcare professional if you are worried.

Urgent help

Get urgent medical advice if your child seems very unwell, has trouble breathing, or you are seriously concerned:

- Contact your GP surgery
- Call NHS 111
- Go to the emergency department in an emergency.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital
Marshall's Cross Road,
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA
Telephone: 01744 26633

Southport Hospital
Town Lane, Kew,
Southport, Merseyside, PR8 6PN
Telephone: 01704 547 471

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way, Wigan Road,
Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2AZ
Telephone: 01695 577 111



**Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals**
NHS Trust

Enlarged lymph nodes in children

Information for parents/legal guardians

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotowuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

This leaflet explains

What enlarged lymph nodes are, why they happen in children and when to seek medical advice.

What are lymph nodes?

Lymph nodes are small glands that help the body fight infection.

They are found in places such as:

- the neck
- behind the ears
- under the arms
- the groin.

When a child is unwell, these glands often become bigger. This is called enlarged lymph nodes.

What do enlarged lymph nodes feel like?

They usually:

- are small (often less than 2 cm)
- feel soft or rubbery
- move easily under the skin
- may feel a little tender.

This is a normal response to infection.

What causes lymph nodes to swell?

The most common causes are everyday infections, such as:

- colds
- sore throats
- ear infections
- skin infections
- dental (tooth) infections

Much less often, enlarged lymph nodes can be linked to other conditions.

Serious causes are uncommon in children.

Do enlarged lymph nodes need treatment?

Often, no treatment is needed.

The lymph nodes usually shrink on their own as your child gets better.

Your GP may:

- give reassurance
- suggest rest and fluids
- prescribe antibiotics if there is a bacterial infection
- arrange a review if the swelling does not settle.

When should I see a doctor?

Contact your GP if any of the following apply:

- the lymph node is getting bigger
- the lymph node is larger than about 2cm
- the swelling does not improve after 6 weeks
- the skin over the lump becomes red, hot or very painful
- your child has:
 - a persistent fever
 - unexplained weight loss
 - night sweats
 - unusual tiredness
- the lump feels hard or does not move
- the swelling is immediately above the collarbone
- you are worried or unsure

You do not need to wait - it is always okay to ask for advice.

