

## What is this leaflet about?

Telling if your child is seriously ill can be really tricky, even for a doctor. As GPs we see large numbers of children every single day and luckily very serious illness in children is not that common, but as parents, we all naturally worry about our children if they are not their usual selves. This leaflet is to help you recognise if a child is poorly and what to do. Hopefully this will reduce undue worry when dealing with children, and also help parents to act quickly if there are signs of serious illness.

## What conditions do children get?

Commonly, children suffer with the following conditions: chest related (e.g., coughs and colds, croup, bronchiolitis, chest infections, asthma), other infections (e.g., sore throats, earache, diarrhoea and vomiting, urine infections, conjunctivitis, threadworms, headlice), rashes (e.g., chickenpox, hand foot and mouth, fungal infections, allergies, eczema), constipation and hayfever. Many of these conditions get better by themselves, but sometimes they can worsen and cause more serious illness.

More serious conditions include pneumonia, meningitis and new onset diabetes. Not all of these conditions present with clear cut symptoms that tell you or the doctor what the diagnosis is. This leaflet therefore covers more general symptoms that you should look out for so that you can recognise when a condition may be becoming more serious and how urgently you need to seek help.

## How do I self-care at home?

It is useful for parents to have remedies at home to manage common childhood illnesses. Useful items include liquid paracetamol and ibuprofen, for reducing pain or temperature, antihistamine (e.g., piriton) for allergies and hives, antiseptic cream to help prevent minor scrapes becoming infected, and a simple first aid kit with some plasters, basic dressings, scissors and tweezers.

Drinking plenty, steam inhalation for coughs and colds (use the shower in the bathroom, steam up kitchen with lid off kettle), ensuring room temperatures are not too hot or too cold, maintaining good hygiene and not smoking around children are all helpful in many childhood illnesses.

## What is the tumbler or glass test?

You will see in the chart that the tumbler test is mentioned. This is where a rash does not fade when a clear glass is pressed firmly against the skin. It may be a sign of meningitis. If you suspect it, ring 999.

## How do I get more advice or help?

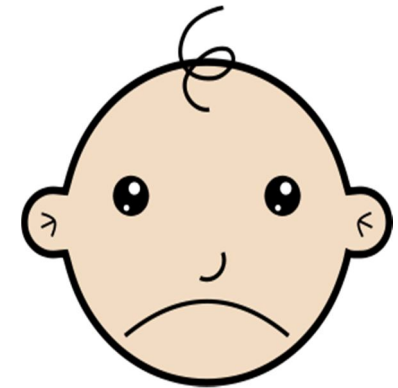
When should I worry? booklet: [bit.ly/1K0A5mk](http://bit.ly/1K0A5mk)  
How to tell if a child is seriously ill: [bit.ly/1NSfsn8](http://bit.ly/1NSfsn8)  
Symptom checker: [ivy.gs/symptoms](http://ivy.gs/symptoms)  
Help for your condition: [ivy.gs/help](http://ivy.gs/help)  
Medical advice: [ivy.gs/advice](http://ivy.gs/advice)  
Ivy Grove: 01773 514130 or 111 if out of hours  
For further advice ring NHS111: 111

---

Written by Dr M. Wong © March 2016 v1.01  
Not to be reproduced without permission

# IVY GROVE SURGERY

## How can I tell if my child is poorly?



*An advice leaflet for  
parents and carers*

**Tel: 01773 514130**

PROBABLY WELL	MAY BE UNWELL	LIKELY UNWELL	LIKELY SERIOUSLY ILL
Your child looks a bit under the weather but overall seems all right	Your child looks unwell and you are starting to get concerned	Your instincts tell you your child is very poorly	You are extremely worried, or may have called health services several times already
May be less active, but still playing at times, or improves with paracetamol	Not playing at all	Marked slowdown in activity	Flat, unresponsive, floppy infant or baby
Still smiling, laughing, talkative, remains responsive to social cues	Clingy, crying more, less alert	No interest in anything at all, unresponsive to all social cues	Very listless, lethargic or drowsy child or becoming more agitated
No temperature or mild temperature (less than 38°C)	Temperature persistently more than 38°C, or doesn't drop with paracetamol	Temperature more than 40°C	High temperature (warm body) but cold or discoloured hands or feet
Eating and drinking pretty much as normal or slightly reduced appetite	Eating and drinking less than normal	Drinking less than half usual amount or no drinks for more than 8 hours	Having a seizure or fit for the very first time, even if fully recovers
Passing urine normally or wet nappies as usual	Not passing water as much or having fewer wet nappies	Not passed water or no wet nappies for 12 hours	Cannot swallow anything at all or is drooling excessively
No rashes and normal skin colour	Pinkish rash that blanches (disappears with tumbler test)	Colour change, going blue, pale, mottled or ashen	Blotchy, mottled, purple-red rash that does not go with tumbler test
No problems breathing	Cough for more than 3 weeks or family history of asthma	Breathless – fast breathing, panting, very wheezy, grunting or gasping	Really struggling to breathe (skin sucking in under ribcage or neck)
If you think your child has a simple cold or viral infection	Persistent temperature, but no other signs of possible infection	Repeated vomiting with or without bile-stained (green) vomit	Unconscious (won't wake up) and/or not breathing
Responds well to temperature control, fluids and general care	Losing weight and doesn't regain it within 2-4 weeks	Severe abdominal pain	If you think your child has meningitis
Maintains a steady improvement throughout condition/illness	Condition getting worse as time goes on, or seems to be lasting long time	Accidental poisoning with medication, chemicals, button batteries or plants	Uncontrollable shivering or shaking with high temperature
Does not appear to be in any distress	Appears to have ongoing pain, discomfort, or continued distress	High-pitched, weak or continual crying	Delirious, confused, vacant or disorientated child



<b>Try self-care or ring for advice if concerned</b>	<b>Ring GP same day for advice and/or appointment</b>	<b>Take child to Children's A+E at Royal Derby Hospital now</b>	<b>Ring 999 immediately</b>
--	---	---	-----------------------------

**Remember, if your child is very young (e.g., a baby under 3 months old or premature), or has other medical problems, or is appearing absolutely exhausted, or you are not coping very well or you are unsure about any of the symptoms above, please do ring us or NHS111 for advice, stating your concerns**