



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Viral Induced Wheeze Information for parents

Issued by Child Health

This leaflet is to give you more information about Viral Induced Wheeze and to help you manage this if your child becomes unwell.

Name.....

Date of Birth.....

Emergency Contact Number.....

What is Viral Induced Wheeze?

Viral induced wheeze is when the tubes carrying air to the lungs (airways) become irritated and inflamed by a cold virus. This causes the tubes to swell and narrow making it more difficult for your child to breathe.

Viral induced wheeze is common, affecting nearly a third of all children, but your child is more likely to develop it if they were born early, if they have ever had bronchiolitis or if they are exposed to cigarette smoke.

Is Viral Induced Wheeze the same as Asthma?

No, although the flare ups (exacerbations) look very similar to an asthma attack, children with viral induced wheeze are completely well between episodes, unlike children with asthma.

In addition, most children with viral induced wheeze will slowly improve year on year and often have grown out of their condition completely by the time they reach school age.

A small number of children will go on to develop asthma in the future.

How do we treat Viral Induced Wheeze?

Like all children with a cold virus, it is important your child gets plenty of fluids. If your child is hot or uncomfortable you can give them paracetamol.

If your child is becoming wheezy and short of breath a medicine called Salbutamol can be used to open up the narrowed breathing tubes. This medicine is given via a puffer (inhaler) and should only be taken with the help of a spacer. This helps the medicines get into the lungs where it needs to be to work.

Should my child have antibiotics or steroids?

The cold virus, that causes the airways to swell, is not killed by antibiotics therefore these should not be given.

Similarly, steroids (anti-inflammatory medicines) have been shown to have no effect in treating viral induced wheeze.

Contact

If your child becomes unwell and you need further advice please contact your GP.

Green Zone: Starting to be unwell

- Your child has a cold and is becoming chesty, wheezy and short of breath
- Give 2-4 puffs through the spacer every 4 hours
- It is safe to do this for up to 3 days as long as your child is not getting worse
- Arrange to see your GP if symptoms persist

Amber Zone: Unwell

- Your child's symptoms are worsening despite green zone treatment
- Increase from 4 puffs to 6-10 puffs every 4 hours
- Arrange for your child to be seen by your GP or in an A and E that day

Red Zone: Severe

Call 999 if you notice any of the following:

- Hard and fast breathing
- Sucking in of the ribs during breathing
- Unable to talk in a sentence
- Is pale/grey or has a blue tinge to the lips
- Becomes drowsy or floppy

Use the blue inhaler 1 puff at a time continuously until help arrives

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **07815 500015**

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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