

### ***How you can manage the fever:***

- ▶ Check your child's temperature. If you don't have a thermometer, place your hand on the child's back/chest or under the arm. The normal temperature under the arm is 36.5°C.
- ▶ Undress your child leaving a nappy and singlet on.
- ▶ Give your child lots of fluid regularly and keep encouraging them. Let them eat if they feel they want to.
- ▶ Keep the room cool, but not draughty.
- ▶ A cool face cloth can help them feel better, but don't sponge their whole body down.
- ▶ Give Paracetamol ("Pamol", "Panadol") every four hours as directed on the bottle.
- ▶ Don't sleep in the same bed as your child – you may make the fever worse.

Giving this extra care will help your child feel more comfortable.

### ***Seek Medical Attention if your child is:***

- ▶ Unusually sleepy
- ▶ Having difficulty breathing or breathing very fast
- ▶ Disorientated or has a 'fit' or convulsion
- ▶ Taking less than normal fluids
- ▶ Complaining of a sore neck or head
- ▶ Complaining of pain – such as earache or abdominal pain
- ▶ Developing a rash (especially dark purple spots)
- ▶ Not improving within 48 hours



# When to take your child to the doctor

Young children often become unwell during winter with infections.

Most of these illnesses can be treated by your Family Doctor (GP).

It helps to see your G.P. as early as possible when your child is unwell, this may avoid your child becoming so sick that they need to come to hospital.

Hospital Emergency Departments are extremely busy in winter. It is common for the waiting time to be 2-3 hours or even longer at busy times. Please see your G.P. or an after hours clinic first unless it is a real emergency.

***You can help stop your child getting sick by:***

- ▶ Immunise your child
- ▶ Healthy diet, plenty of fruit and vegetables rather than sweets.
- ▶ Breast feeding is best for your baby
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary contact with unwell children
- ▶ Avoid bringing well brothers and sisters to hospital
- ▶ Keep babies away from children with coughs and colds
- ▶ Don't expose your children to cigarette smoke
- ▶ Don't take your children to Day-care when they have coughs & colds, vomiting or diarrhoea.

- ▶ Dress your children warmly
- ▶ For family support talk to your well child nurse (Plunket Nurse, Practice or Public Health Nurse)
- ▶ Practice good hand washing
- ▶ Encourage your children and others to cover their mouth when coughing

If your child has a fever this usually means that they have an infection. Your child's infection could be caused by either viruses or bacteria.

Viruses are most common. They cause almost all of the coughs and colds and vomiting/diarrhoea infections.

Antibiotics don't help when you have a virus infection. Your child will get better with time (7-10 days) and will not normally need medicines (except possibly paracetamol to relieve discomfort.)

Bacteria cause some more severe infections like pneumonia, urine infections and meningitis.

Bacterial infections can get a lot worse if not diagnosed and treated with antibiotics. If you see your General Practitioner early, many of these infections can be treated with antibiotics at home and not need any hospital treatment.

A few bacterial infections are so severe that your child might need to go to hospital quickly. Your G.P. is the best person to decide whether this is needed. Your G.P. can also sometimes start treatment to stop your child getting worse before they get to the hospital.