

Parent guidelines

The guidelines have been made by a working group with staff from departments of paediatrics in Herning, Randers, Skejby and Viborg.

The intention with the guidelines is to provide parents with advice across the following sectors: health visitors, general practitioners (family doctors), doctors on call, and the staff at paediatric departments.

You can see and download the parent guidelines at the following homepage: www.rm.dk/via53376.html

You can order additional copies from Rikke Dalsgaard at the Regional Health Office, the Central Denmark Region, Skottenborg 28, 8800 Viborg. Rikke.Dalsgaard@stab.rm.dk

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CHILDREN WITH

whooping cough



Regionshuset
Viborg
Nære Sundhedstilbud

Children with whooping cough

General information:

Whooping cough is caused by an infection with a contagious bacterium. After being infected, it takes 3-14 days for the symptoms to appear. Infants with whooping cough often get very ill.

Babies are vaccinated against whooping cough when they are 3-5 months old and 12 months old. The vaccination does not give 100% protection, so the child can still catch whooping cough several times, but the course of the disease will be milder.

Whooping cough has two stages:

- A common cold stage, which lasts 1-2 weeks
- A coughing stage, which lasts 2-8 weeks.

How is it contracted?

Whooping cough bacteria are found in the child's spit and mucus, and infects through breathing in small droplets, e.g. from coughing and sneezing, and/or from hands, toys,

etc. contaminated with mucus or spit.

The infection primarily spreads during the common cold stage, but the child can infect others 8-9 weeks after the disease has started.

Symptoms:

In the common cold stage:

- Common cold symptoms
- Sometimes accompanied by fever and coughing.

In the coughing stage:

- The coughing gets worse, and the child typically has coughing spells and the facial colour can turn very red, blue or white
- The coughing spells can vary from a few to 40-50 a day, and they can last from a few seconds to several minutes – and they often end with the child coughing up thick mucus
- Infants can briefly stop breathing
- The child "whoops" (gasp for air after several coughing spells)
- The child will often vomit after a coughing spell
- The child often hurts when coughing.

Good advice:

- Offer the child a lot to drink. Liquids make the mucus thinner and easier to cough up
- Do not dress in warm clothes if the child has fever
- Elevate the child's bed head, which will make it easier to breathe. Changing position, sleep-

ing on both sides, sitting up in bed, moving/playing all make the mucus more liquid and easier for the child to cough up

- Fresh air. Air out several times a day
- Saline drops for the nose can loosen thick snot/mucus. You can use a "nose suction device", which you can buy at the pharmacy
- Do not smoke. It irritates the child's airways
- Tell the parents of other babies you have been in contact with that your child has whooping cough.

When to see a doctor:

Contact a doctor if the child:

- has long coughing spells with violent whooping (gasping for air)
- turns blue or pale in the face after coughing, or stops breathing
- has vomited a lot and refuses to drink
- seems more tired and weak than usual
- worries you and you feel insecure.

Contact your general practitioner first because he/she knows your child better than the doctor on call. You can also get good advice and guidance from the health visitor.

Treatment:

- If the symptoms are noticed in time, the child can be treated with antibiotics. This can make the course of the disease milder and reduce the risk of infecting others

- Give the child pain relieving medication as agreed with a doctor
- Relieve the symptoms.

Prevention:

- Find out whether other children in the area or your local mothers' group have whooping cough
- Notice that your child is particularly at risk of infection during its first 3 months
- Vaccination gives a good protection, but since the first vaccination is not very effective, infants especially below 6 months should not be exposed to infection
- Good hygiene. Always wash your hands after touching the child
- If your child has whooping cough, avoid contact with other children from 0 to 6 months due to the risk of infection.

Daycare/School:

The child can return to daycare or school when the fever has disappeared and if the coughing spells no longer cause problems. Even though the child can infect others for several weeks after coughing has started, the rule is that the child can return to daycare or school anyway. This is because it is assumed that the other children have had at least two vaccinations. Contact with infants (0-6 months) should still be avoided. Inform the daycare or school that your child has whooping cough.