

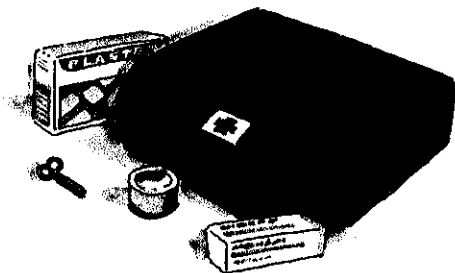
Family Medicine Chest

Here is a list of useful medicines and dressings with a description of their uses. All are quite cheap and worth stocking at home in readiness for minor illnesses. Keep them in a box or cupboard with a lock, or store them well out of reach of children.

- Paracetamol syrups - for relief of pain or fever in young children.
- Antiseptic cream - for treating septic spots and grazes.
- Calamine lotion - for dabbing (not rubbing) on insect bites and stings and sunburn.
- Non adhesive dressings, sticking plaster and 3" wide crepe bandage - to keep dressings in place and to support sprained or bruised joints.
- A selection of plasters.
- Cotton wool - for cleaning cuts and grazes or antiseptic wipes.
- A thermometer/fever scan (forehead thermometer).
- A good up to date first aid book e.g. St John Ambulance, Red Cross.

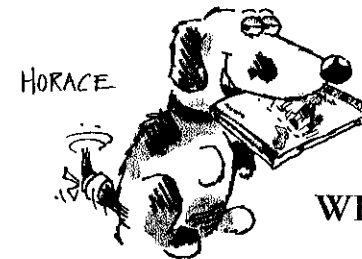
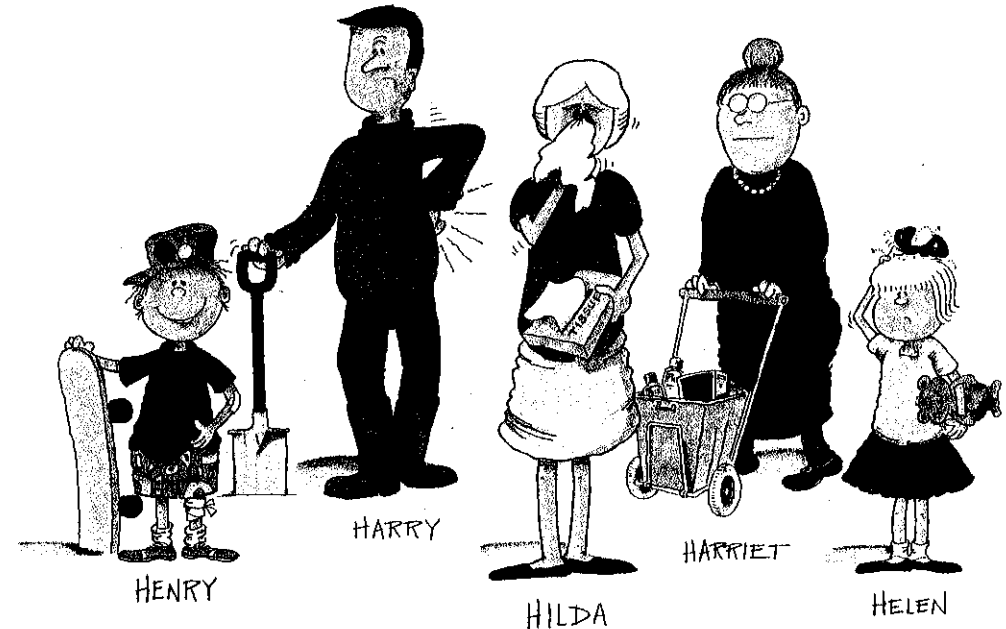
ALWAYS KEEP MEDICINES IN A SAFE PLACE.

*YOU SHOULD RETURN UNUSED OR OUT OF DATE MEDICINES
TO YOUR LOCAL PHARMACIST*



ELP S O ELP OU

THE HUTHY FAMILY



WILTSHIRE HEALTH AUTHORITY

THE HOME TREATMENT GUIDE

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Sensible precautions if a member of your family is unwell

- Paracetamol is the best treatment for a high temperature. There are various preparations for children. Your pharmacist can advise you about what is available.
- Ensure they do not overheat under too many bedclothes. If they feel hot remove the blankets and sponge them down with a cool, but not cold, flannel.
- If they have a high temperature do not worry if they do not want to eat. It is more important to encourage them to drink water or weak squash or juice on a regular basis.
- Keep a separate towel for them to use when washing.
- After washing any cotton handkerchiefs they use, iron the handkerchiefs with a hot iron which will kill any germs. Otherwise, use disposable handkerchiefs.
- Keep a separate plate, knife, fork, spoon and cup for them to use during their illness.

Explaining this booklet...

You will always be able to receive advice from a doctor or nurse if you have a serious medical problem in the evenings or at weekends.

You may occasionally be asked to attend an out-of-hours centre for your problem to be assessed or for treatment to be given.

This booklet will help you to cope with minor illnesses at home. Helping yourself will help your doctor at the same time.

It explains simple treatments for minor illnesses and accidents which are likely to occur in every family from time to time.

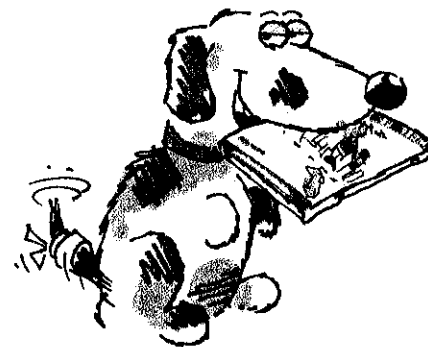
In some of these cases there is nothing a doctor can do that the patient cannot do just as well.

This booklet will help you to know:

- When you can treat yourself and save the doctor valuable time to help patients who are more seriously ill.
- When you really need to see the doctor.
- Where you can find more health information. For many topics you can listen to a tape, by freephoning 0800 66 55 44.

We hope you will find the booklet useful. On the back page is a list of useful medicines and dressings which are worth keeping at home in readiness for minor illnesses.

And remember, whenever you are really anxious or ill, advice can be obtained over the telephone. Just ring the number of your own G.P. practice.



Cuts, bruises, bites and burns

Most cuts, grazes and bruises can be treated at home.

Cuts

Bleeding can usually be stopped by continuous pressure over the cut for 3 or 4 minutes. The cut can then be carefully inspected. If it has bled freely any germs will normally have been washed away by the blood.

Apply a plaster dressing firmly, bringing the edges of the cut together so that it knits quickly. Keep dry for 1 to 2 days.

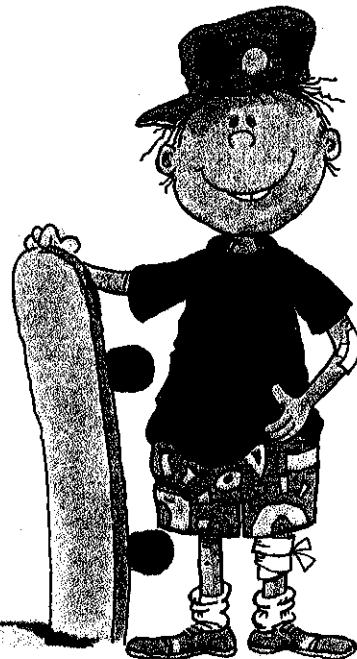
When to see the Doctor or a practice nurse

If the cut is deep and the edges cannot be pulled together with a dressing.

A tetanus injection in this situation may well be needed if you are not up to date with your immunisations. Please see the practice nurse to ensure you are adequately protected

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Cuts, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 095.

*Your GP will always try and see you for a routine problem within 3 working days.
..... Don't forget to cancel an appointment if you are unable to attend or your problem resolves itself.*



Grazes

Dirt will often enter a graze caused by falling on a hard or rough surface. It must be cleaned out carefully with clean water or a weak antiseptic solution.

After cleaning, leave the graze uncovered. Exposure to the air will allow the graze to gradually dry and cause a scab to form.

It is not a good idea to apply a dressing.

Nose bleeds

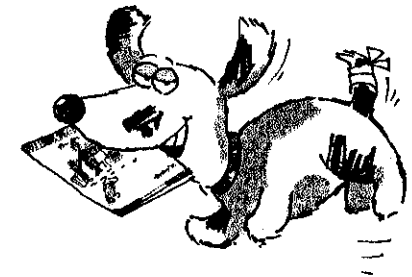
Sit in a chair (leaning forward with your mouth open) and pinch your nose continuously just below the bone for at least 10 minutes, by which time the bleeding should have stopped. At the same time you can apply an ice pack to your forehead.

When going to bed, sleep on two or three pillows. Avoid hot drinks or blowing your nose for 12 hours.

When to see the Doctor

If the symptoms persist then consult your doctor or attend the Casualty Department.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Nose Bleeds, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 046.



*A GP will always give enough time to listen to, assess and treat a problem.
..... Tell the Doctor the reason for the consultation immediately. Do not spend time discussing minor ailments that are not of great concern.*

Bruises

Bruises are very common in children, and normally get better in 7 to 10 days. Parents sometimes worry that a bone may be broken but children's bones rarely break. If you are in doubt, then see the doctor or practice nurse.

If a child gets up at once after a fall and moves about normally, it is unlikely that a bone has been broken. However, the child may be stiff the next day because of the bruising which has occurred. Severe bruising can be treated by avoiding any vigorous exercise for 24 to 48 hours. In the case of a badly bruised leg, the limb should be raised whenever you sit down.

A cold compress may ease a bad bruise if applied at once. This is made by soaking some material in water and applying it to the bruise or, preferably, by wrapping ice cubes in a tea towel. A bag of frozen peas makes an equally effective cold compress.

Bruises on the head may cause anxiety. If the patient was not 'knocked out' and can remember the accident it is unlikely that serious injury has resulted. However, if the patient was knocked unconscious and cannot remember what happened, he or she should be taken to the hospital casualty department without delay.

Your GP is trained to deal with an extremely large variety of medical problems, especially serious illnesses. There are, however, other health professionals in the community who are very able to offer advice and help. If you have a medical problem consider asking your pharmacist, health visitor or practice nurse. They may be able to help you.



For recorded information regarding the treatment of Bruises, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 095.

Insect bites

These are common in the summer. They look like spots about 1/4" in width. They are very itchy and usually appear on exposed parts of the body, e.g. arms and legs.

The itching can be relieved by calamine lotion. Antihistamine tablets can be obtained from chemists without prescription and will usually relieve most symptoms.

Note: Bee stings should be scraped away rather than plucked in order to avoid squeezing the contents of the venom sac into the wound.

Burns and scalds

Minor burns and scalds cause redness of the skin. Apply a large quantity of cold water to the affected areas as soon as possible. Maintain this until the pain subsides. This may take as long as 15 minutes. Do not use oily or greasy ointments on burns as this 'cooks' them and makes them worse. If the skin is unbroken but blistered apply a loose, dry dressing. If the burn is larger than 4" to 5" in diameter, or the skin is broken, consult your doctor or practice nurse as soon as possible.



Sunburn

Treat as for other burns, with cold water to remove the heat. Calamine lotion can relieve the irritation whilst paracetamol tablets will also help. Children are particularly susceptible to sunburn and great care should be taken to avoid over-exposure to the harmful effects of the sun. Use of high factor sun cream is advisable to prevent burning in children.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Sunburn, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 098.

Coughs

A cough is the most common symptom presented to the doctor.

If flies or food enter the air passages in the throat, coughing acts as a protector. In the same way, during a cold, coughing also prevents mucus from entering the air passages and causing infection. To suppress this reflex action with cough mixtures can cause more harm than good, especially if large quantities of linctus are used on a frequent basis.

The best treatments are steam inhalations.

A sedative linctus which can be bought from a chemist should be used sparingly.

If you develop a serious illness or problem at night or during the weekend you will always be able to obtain advice from a Doctor or Nurse. If, however, the problem is not serious and can wait then contact your Doctor's surgery during normal working hours.

When to see the doctor

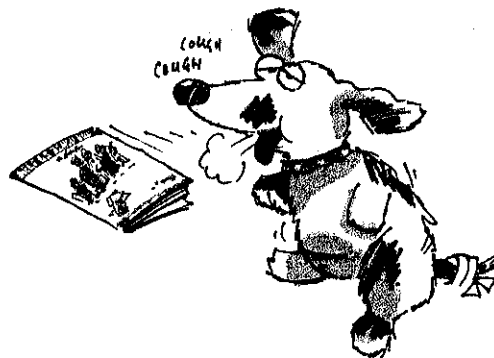
If coughing continues for more than after a common cold has cleared up.

If coughing produces yellow or green spit - which may mean that the lower air passages are infected.

If breathing is accompanied by a pain in the chest or shortness of breath.

If coughing produces blood.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Children's Coughs freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 210.



Diarrhoea

In adults most diarrhoea is usually caused by a viral infection and cannot be treated directly.

However, it is important to stop eating all food stuffs, including milk and to maintain an adequate intake of clear fluids (water or water flavoured with a small amount of fruit juice).

If holiday diarrhoea persists for more than 2 days consult your doctor. Diarrhoea in very young children and babies needs particularly careful attention. Most babies have loose bowel actions during their first 6 months due to their predominantly liquid diet. Sudden bouts of unusually watery diarrhoea should be treated by taking the baby off solid foods and feeding the baby either boiled water or water mixed with rehydrating sachets such as Dioralyte. If symptoms persist for more than 24 hours and are accompanied by vomiting or weakness you should consult your doctor.

Treatment

Drink: Encourage the patient to drink plenty of water.

When to seek medical advice

If the diarrhoea or discomfort does not begin to settle within 48 hours.

If there is continuous pain rather than separate bouts of stomach cramp.

If diarrhoea occurs in an infant under 6 months.

If an attack comes shortly after a visit to a foreign country.

If the patient suffers repeated attacks.

If there is blood mixed with the stool.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Diarrhoea, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 011(adults) and 012 (children.)

When you have been prescribed a medicine by your GP you should take it the way your Doctor has told you. Do not be afraid to tell your Doctor or Pharmacist if you have stopped taking your medicine for any reason - it is important that they know this.

Sore throat

Most sore throats are caused by a viral infection which antibiotics cannot cure. With simple treatment, however, the patient normally gets better in 4 or 5 days.

Tonsillitis usually starts with a sore throat which causes pain on swallowing. With children - and some adults - there may be a rise in temperature and the patient is usually obviously under the weather.

It may be possible to see the swollen tonsils with white spots on them. The lymph glands on the neck may also swell. These swellings are the normal response to infection.

Sometimes a sore throat may occur with the common cold. In cases of influenza there may be dryness of the throat, pain on coughing and loss of voice.



Treatment for adults

Gargle with half a teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water three times per day, or gargle with a soluble aspirin three times per day.

Take paracetamol for pain and/or temperature.

Drink: Encourage the patient to drink plenty of fluids.

If you receive regular medicines from your Doctor you may sometimes notice that they do not always have the same appearance. Although it will be the same drug you have previously received, it may have been made by a different manufacturer who may even have used a different name. Be assured that all the manufacturers are subject to tight controls on the quality of their product. If you are worried, talk to your pharmacist.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Sore Throat, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 108.

Food: Food should not be forced on a patient who does not wish to eat.

Steam: If there is pain in the throat on coughing, steam inhalations may help.

Note: Do not give aspirin derivatives to any child under the age of 12 years.

Children

Young children, should be given paracetamol for pain and/or temperature.

When to see the doctor
If the sore throat is still getting worse after 3 days.

If the temperature rises above 39.5 °C or 103 °F

The old adage is that with antibiotics a sore throat will get better in 7 days, without antibiotics it will get better in a week.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Earache, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 077 (children).

Earache

Earache occurs fairly commonly in children and is often associated with a cold, a sore throat or teething. Younger children may pull at their ears whilst older children will complain of discomfort, especially when lying down. There are several approaches to the treatment of this problem, all of which will help make your child more comfortable.

Give your child a medicine or tablet such as paracetamol for their pain and temperature.

Raise the head of their bed with either a few books or telephone directories under the head end of the bed or, alternatively, with a cushion or folded blanket under the top part of the mattress.

Ensure they sit in a steamy atmosphere (either a steamy bathroom or steamy kitchen) for about quarter of an hour, two or three times a day, to help decongest them.

Avoid exposing your child to cigarette smoke.

When to see the Doctor
If the Earache does not settle after about 24 hours.

Stuffy, running nose

The common cold usually starts with a hot feeling in the back of the nose and sometimes a dry throat. The patient feels generally unwell and achey. After a day or two the nose starts running with a clear liquid and after 3 or 4 days this changes to a thick, yellow discharge. There may be a slight temperature of 37.5°C to 38°C or 99°F to 100°F and the whole illness lasts 7 to 10 days.

In summer, hay fever caused by pollen in the air may create similar symptoms - with the addition of sneezing and sore, itchy eyes. Even in this day and age there is still no cure for the common cold.

If you are incapacitated through illness day or night, and a Doctor considers a visit is necessary, they will always come to see you. If, however, you are not totally incapacitated the Doctor may ask you to come to them. Whilst you are travelling the Doctor is available to see other people.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Hay Fever, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 096

Treatment

Take plenty of drinks.

If you have a headache or are feverish take paracetamol.

Do not take any antibiotics you may have in the house - they may make matters worse.



Vomiting

Vomiting may be caused by a viral infection of the stomach, by eating too much, or by drinking too much. It usually stops within 24 hours, but in some cases may be followed by diarrhoea.

Some children vomit when they have a temperature.

Treatment

Eat nothing.

Drink small quantities of water every hour.

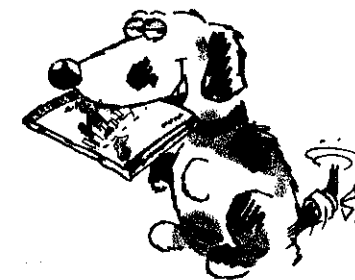
Do not drink milk or hot fluids. As the stomach settles take foods such as dry biscuits, bread or breakfast cereals before gradually returning to a normal diet.

When to seek medical advice

If vomiting is accompanied by continuous stomach pain.

If vomiting lasts for more than 24 hours.

If a vomiting child has a temperature of more than 38°C or 100°F.



Stomach ache

Most attacks are not serious and are usually caused by indigestion, wind or constipation. A hot water bottle will often relieve the symptoms and in the case of indigestion a simple antacid will help. If the pain lasts for longer than 8 hours or increases in intensity you should consult your doctor.

If you experience a genuine emergency, you should always receive help within 40 minutes. If, however, your problem can wait and is not a serious medical emergency you should not request urgent attention. Your Doctor may be needed elsewhere.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Constipation, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 009

Back pain

This causes millions of working days to be lost in Britain each year. Because of the complex nature of the spine it is advisable to consult your doctor if back pain persists for more than a few days. If, as is usual, the pain has been caused by simple abuse, e.g. lifting weights that are too heavy, be sensible and take things easy. Paracetamol may be taken. Ibuprofen is also useful if this does not give you indigestion and if you are not asthmatic. This will not only relieve the pain but will help to relieve inflammation. It may also help to use an ice pack over the painful area. Your doctor may well prescribe stronger drugs if necessary. At the onset of symptoms, rest is essential. At night rest your back by lying on a firm mattress.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Back Pain, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 101 (prevention).



Your GP will try and see you at the time of your appointment but the unpredictable nature of illness will sometimes mean that there are delays. Try not to cause delays at your Doctor's surgery by asking your GP to see other members of your family when only a single appointment was made for yourself.

Headlice

Contrary to popular belief these creatures prefer clean hair and are therefore not a sign of poor personal hygiene. Medicated head lotion can be bought at the chemist.

Inspect the whole family and treat those infected. If the problem re-occurs treat everybody even if they are not affected.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Head Lice, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 043.

Sprains

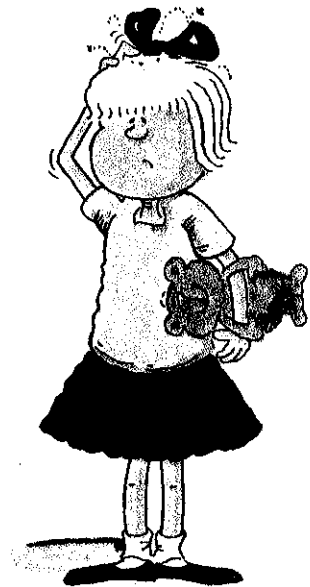
Treatment

First apply a cold compress containing ice if possible for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce the swelling.

Apply a crepe bandage, firmly and elevate the limb. Give the sprain plenty of rest until all the discomfort has subsided.

Further strain will inevitably lead to more swelling and a longer recovery period.

If it is the wrist or ankle, elevate the limb e.g. arm in sling.



Your Doctor will always provide you with the medication that you need. However, on many occasions advice and reassurance is all that is required. For example, antibiotics will not cure a cold.

Measles, German Measles and Mumps

These three illnesses are becoming far less common since the introduction of a vaccination which your child will generally have just after they are one year old.

Measles

This normally takes between 1 and 2 weeks to develop following contact with a sufferer. Initially your child will tend to develop a cough, cold and temperature and then after around 3 days a rash develops. The rash consists of slightly raised red spots which are the size of a pinhead. The rash begins on the face before spreading down across the rest of the body. The cough tends to continue throughout the whole illness which will generally last between seven and nine days. Give paracetamol for the temperature and encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids. Do not worry if they do not want to eat.

German Measles

This is usually a very mild illness in children. There is often a faint rash which generally only lasts for 2 or 3 days. You should keep your child off school and, if you can, away from people in the early stages of pregnancy. There is no particular treatment required for this illness.

Mumps

There is often swelling of the glands on one or both sides of the face, just in front of the ears. The swollen glands are often uncomfortable and tender and sometimes your child will have a temperature.

Paracetamol and rest at home will generally see the illness settle within a week.

If you develop a serious illness or problem at night or during the weekend you will always be able to obtain advice from a Doctor or Nurse.

If, however, the problem is not serious and can wait then contact your Doctor's surgery during normal working hours.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Measles, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 044.

For German Measles, tape number 039 (children) 147 (in pregnancy).

For Mumps tape number 045.

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis or inflammation of the white of the eye can be quite infectious but is rarely serious. Both eyes are usually affected. Older children will often complain of slightly sore eyes with a gritty feeling. They will sometimes wake up in the morning with yellowy-white matter in the corner of their eyes and this may well reaccumulate after cleaning during the day.

Clean your child's eyes frequently (every 3 or 4 hours) with water which has been boiled and left to cool. Use pieces of cottonwool which you should then throw away.

Conjunctivitis will often get better by itself within two or three days. Because it is quite infectious it may be necessary to keep your child off playgroup or school for a day or two until the problem has started to settle.



When to see the Doctor

If the Conjunctivitis has not settled after two or three days.

If your child appears to be in pain rather than just slight discomfort.

If your child appears to have injured their eye in any way.

If the Conjunctivitis occurs in a child who is less than 2 weeks old.

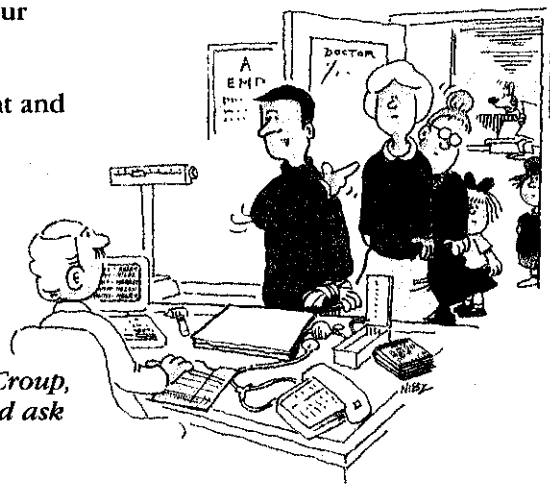


Croup

Croup is a particular type of cough which sometimes affects young children up to the age of 4 or 5 years old. The child will frequently go to bed with a slight cold and awake during the night with a cough that sounds very much like a dog's bark. You should immediately take them into a steamy atmosphere such as the bathroom with a hot shower running or the kitchen with a couple of saucepans of water boiling on the stove. With this treatment the croupy cough should begin to settle within 10 to 15 minutes. When putting the child back to bed you should prop the head or top of the bed with either telephone directories under the head end of the bed or a folded blanket or cushion under the mattress. Avoid exposing your child to cigarette smoke.

Croup is often worse at night and will generally last only a day or two.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Croup, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 244.



When to see the Doctor

If your child seems to be having problems with their breathing.

If your child is drooling saliva.

If there is a possibility that your child has swallowed or inhaled an object.

Chickenpox

Chickenpox is rarely a serious illness in normally healthy children. It may take between 2 and 3 weeks to develop after your child has been in contact with the illness. It is characterised by the development of small blisters starting on the chest and tummy and gradually spreading to the face, arms and legs. The blisters are the size of large grains of sugar, raised and initially filled with a clear fluid which later becomes cloudy. These blisters then dry and form scabs. The scabs finally fall off after about 1 to 3 weeks and should not leave scars.

Give your child paracetamol if they have a temperature.

Allow them to have cool baths which will help the itching.

If itching from the spots is very troublesome you can get an antihistamine medicine such as Phenergan from your pharmacist which will help settle the problem.



When to see the Doctor

If your child has spots on the edge of the eyelid or in the eye.

If your child has spots in the mouth which are making it difficult for them to swallow.

If your child has spots down below making it difficult for them to wee.

If your child develops a bad cough.

You will always be able to receive advice from a doctor or nurse if you have a serious medical problem in the evenings or at weekends.

You may occasionally be asked to attend an out-of-hours centre for your problem to be assessed or for treatment to be given.

For recorded information regarding the treatment of Chickenpox, freephone 0800 66 55 44 and ask for tape number 033.