UK Health Security Agency

Winter infections in children – guidance for parents/guardians

This leaflet gives advice on illnesses that are currently affecting nursery and primary school children across the West Midlands

What are the symptoms?

There are two groups of symptoms:

- Diarrhoea and vomiting – usually lasting 1-2 days
- Fever, tiredness and nausea (feeling sick), sore throat – sometimes with a cough, lasting 3-4 days

What should I do if my child is unwell?

- Keep your child at home until they are well – if your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they should not attend nursery/school until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- Ensure they drink plenty of fluids – taking sips rather than gulps, to avoid vomiting
- If they have a fever – give child paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, according to manufacturer's instructions
- Your child can return to school once they no longer have a temperature (without medication) and are well enough to do so
- If your child is unusually sleepy, is unable to take fluids or has other symptoms, such as an unusual rash, headache or neck stiffness – **seek medical advice immediately**

Infection control advice

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of both of these infections. This applies to the child who is ill and the person caring for them. Hands should be washed using soap and rinsed under running water:

- Before and after caring for the child
- After using the toilet
- Before eating, preparing or handling food
- After cleaning up spills (vomit, diarrhoea or urine)
- Also – keep a separate towel for each family member who has symptoms, and change them regularly
- Dry hands thoroughly

Other control measures:

- Dispose of used tissues immediately
- Wash soiled clothing, bed linen and towels, using the hottest wash setting for the fabric
- Ensure toilet areas, baths and washbasins are kept clean, using hot soapy water
- After initial cleaning, areas may also be infected using a 1 in 10 bleach solution *(remember bleach can burn skin and remove colour from fabrics)*

For further information, visit NHS.uk and search for 'respiratory infections' and 'diarrhoea and vomiting'