

Memo:

Pediatric Emergency Department (Pronto Soccorso) tel. 0498213515



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Salus Pueri Foundation has been active since 1992 and its main goal is to raise funds to support the activities of the Pediatric Hospital of Padua. Every day we work to make our hospital a welcoming and child and family friendly place, and to promote a culture where humanization is at the heart of care.


These parents information guides of the Pediatric Emergency Department of Padua have been created to facilitate the provision of clear and complete information to parents whose kids are experiencing acute health issues.

The parents information guides are not intended to replace the recommendations and tailored advice provided by your pediatrician.

Support the Pediatric Hospital of Padua!

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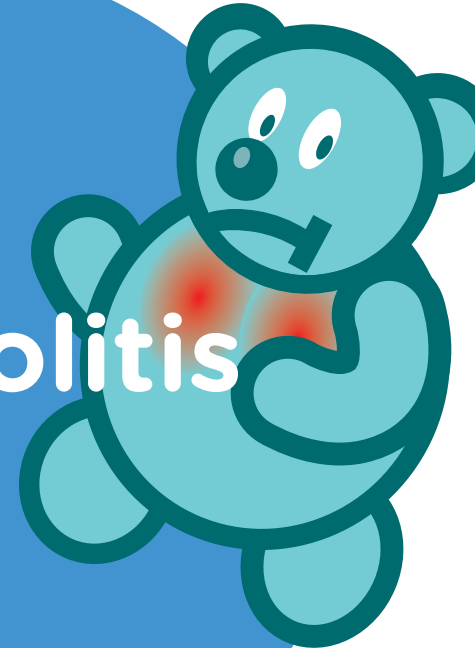


Dipartimento per la Salute
della Donna e del Bambino
- Pronto Soccorso Pediatrico -



**FONDAZIONE
SALUS PUERI**

Bronchiolitis



Parents
information
guides



What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a respiratory infection that affects particularly the terminal bronchi, called bronchioles, the smallest airways, which are only few millimeters in diameter. Inflammation and mucus due to the infection cause narrowing and occlusion of the airways, making it difficult to breathe. The infection is caused by a virus and typically occurs in children under one year of age.

Sign and Symptoms

The infection generally begins as a common cold; after 1-2 days, when the bronchioles are also affected, the following symptoms can also appear: cough, noisy breathing that sounds wheezing, breathing difficulty, with fast breathing, retractions of the chest and jugular notch (the dimple at the base of the neck), movements of the belly during breathing, and feeding difficulties. Fever is uncommon, and it is usually not high.

The infection often resolves spontaneously within 7-10 days (with a peak of severity after 2-3 days from the onset of symptoms).

The risks associated with bronchiolitis are the difficulty of breathing that can sometimes be severe, and cause malaise, feeding difficulties and, and difficulty in maintaining a good blood oxygenation.

Background information

The viruses that most commonly cause bronchiolitis are the Syncytial Respiratory Virus and Rhinovirus. These viruses, which usually cause a common "cold" in adults and older children, are highly contagious.

Prevention is very important and includes:

- accurate and frequent disinfection of the hands (the virus is transmitted through the mucous membranes of the nose, mouth and eyes but it survives for hours on surfaces and can be contracted by touching tables or toys contaminated by respiratory secretions);
- avoiding contact, especially for younger children, with sick people or people with cold;
- avoiding smoke exposure (children whose parents smoke are at higher risk of contracting bronchiolitis and having a prolonged and/or severe infection).

When to urgently seek medical advice or go to the Hospital Emergency Department (Pronto Soccorso)

- if your child presents with significant breathing difficulty or clinical worsening compared to the previous medical evaluation
- if your child has eating or drinking difficulties
- if your child has unusual behavior: sleepiness, poor response to stimuli, weak crying
- if your child has fever > 38.5 °C
- if your child is younger than 3 months of age

Care at home

- observe your child and look for signs of worsening difficulty in breathing
- encourage your child to drink, even if in small sips, and/or to take small and frequent meals
- give nebulizations (or administer other medications), as prescribed by your doctor
- avoid, as far as possible, contacts with other children

Medications

There are no "curative" medications for bronchiolitis, as it is a viral disease that in most cases resolves spontaneously.

Nebulizations with normal saline or hypertonic saline, if well tolerated, can be used to thin the mucus.

For children who have a severe form of the disease and need hospitalization, therapy mainly consists of oxygen administration and hydration.

Other medications can be used only if specifically prescribed by a doctor.

Routine antibiotics are NOT effective, because the cause is a virus.