

10 September 2025

Dear parent

Keeping your children well this winter

As the winter months approach, you may have concerns about your child's health as coughs, colds and other minor illnesses increase.

Right care at the right time

We have created some web pages which offer you helpful advice about common conditions in babies and children and the symptoms to look out for. We hope this information will help you decide when you can treat your child at home, when you need to seek medical help and which service to choose.



Please visit: www.notts.icb.nhs.uk/childrens-health-and-wellbeing

Please be assured that GPs and health services will want to see your child if you have concerns about their health and welfare. We know that babies can decline rapidly, and GPs will continue to prioritise care for babies and toddlers up to two years old. You should keep a watchful eye on how symptoms develop and trust their instincts.

Your General Practice Team is made up of a range of healthcare professionals who work at your practice and in the wider community to help you and your family get the right care when you need it. Depending on their needs, your child may be seen by another general practice team member such as a Nursing Associate or Advanced Physiotherapist.

If you are unsure, use 111.nhs.uk or phone 111 to get assessed and directed to the right NHS service.

Pharmacies

Most Community Pharmacies are offering the Pharmacy First service which includes NHS medicines where appropriate to treat the following in children:

- Sinusitis in those aged 12 years and over
- Sore throat in those aged 5 years and over
- Impetigo (a type of skin infection) in those aged over 1 year.
- Infected insect bite in those aged over 1 year



- Earache in children 1 -17 years (please note: this cannot be provided by distance selling pharmacies)

Your GP practice may refer you to this service, but you can also walk into your local pharmacy and ask how they can help you.

As well as the Pharmacy First service, over the counter medicine from your local pharmacy can help manage symptoms of many minor illness, including paracetamol, ibuprofen and eye drops. Pharmacists can provide advice on the use of these medicines and instructions are provided in the packaging.

Vaccinations

One of the main ways that you and your family can stay well over the winter months is by making sure you are protected from illness.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a common cause of coughs and colds. The RSV vaccine protects newborn babies and is offered at 28 weeks of pregnancy. If you are 28 weeks pregnant or over, speak to your GP or maternity team about this vaccine.

Your GP and some community pharmacies will be delivering flu vaccines to children who are aged two and three and your GP will also be delivering flu vaccines to children aged two to 17 with certain long-term health conditions. All other eligible children will be able to get a flu vaccination through the school immunisation team. All flu vaccines for children are given through a nasal spray rather than an injection. Getting the flu vaccine can protect your child from serious illness this winter. Last December, 93 children under five were hospitalised due to flu in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

It's not too late for your child to catch up on their MMR vaccination. The MMR vaccine is normally given at 12 months and the second dose at three years and four months. But older children and adults can have it if they were not vaccinated when they were younger. Two doses give life-long protection.

Speak to a GP to arrange an appointment if you think you or your child needs to catch up.



Find out more about vaccine eligibility and how to book at:
www.notts.icb.nhs.uk/vaccinations

Absence from school

If your child is unwell and cannot attend school, you don't need a sick note from your GP.

If your child feels well in themselves, you can request that their school administer over the counter medicines to treat their symptoms as needed. **This is at the Head Teacher's discretion** and only covers those medicines where it would be detrimental to your child's attendance if they are not given. This includes non-prescription medicines such as paracetamol, ibuprofen and antihistamines. **A doctor's prescription is not required for**

this. The medicine should be clearly labelled with your child's name and include the packaging so that staff can follow the generic age-related instructions.

Coughs and colds

If your child has a cough or cold, try to encourage them to cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw it away and wash their hands afterwards. We also recommend that they don't visit grandparents and other vulnerable people when they are poorly.

Make sure you also have liquid paracetamol or ibuprofen at home to deal with mild fever.

We are very grateful for your support of your local NHS.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'David Briggs', with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the signature.

Dr Dave Briggs
Medical Director
NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire