



## Information Sheets for Parents – *Health Fact Sheet*

### ***Bronchitis***

#### **National Quality Standard – Quality Area 2**

Element 2.1.2 – Health Practices and Procedures – Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

#### **Description:**

Bronchitis is a chest infection, usually caused by a virus. The virus makes the lining of the trachea and bronchi (the tubes leading from the throat to the lungs) inflamed and swollen, and more mucus is produced than normal. This causes a cough and sometimes a pain in the throat or upper chest when coughing. Bronchitis is usually a mild illness in children.

A person with bronchitis may have the usual signs of a cold, including a runny nose, sore throat and mild fever, and then develop a cough. The cough is often dry at first, then becomes moist after a couple of days. They may have a slight wheeze and shortness of breath. People usually recover from an acute episode of bronchitis in 5–10 days. Some children keep having attacks of bronchitis, or can develop chronic bronchitis. This can be due to allergies, someone smoking around them, or other problems in their lungs.

#### **How does it spread?**

The disease spreads by mouth-to-mouth contact and airborne droplets. It can also spread indirectly by contact with surfaces that have been contaminated by infectious airborne droplets (e.g. hands, tissues, toys, eating utensils).

#### **Incubation period:**

The incubation period for bronchitis is usually 1–3 days.

#### **Infectious period:**

People are infectious just before symptoms begin and during the active stage of the disease.

#### **Exclusion period:**

A child with bronchitis should stay at home until they are feeling well.

**Responsibilities of parents:**

- Keep the child at home until they are feeling well.
- Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette and effective hand hygiene at home.
- Avoid contact between your child and other children, or frail and elderly people, until the child is feeling well. Controlling the spread of infection
- Teach children about cough and sneeze etiquette. – Cough or sneeze into your inner elbow rather than your hand. – If you used a tissue to cover your nose or mouth when sneezing or coughing, put the tissue in the bin straight away. – Clean your hands.
- Avoid contact between the person who is ill and children, or frail and elderly people, until the person is feeling well.

**Treatment:**

Bronchitis in children is nearly always due to a virus, which means that antibiotics will not help the child get better. However, in more serious cases where bronchitis may be caused by bacteria, the doctor may prescribe antibiotics. In mild cases, bed rest in a warm environment for a few days, with a light diet and nourishing drinks, may be all that is needed. Cough medicines may help relieve symptoms. Warming the chest with a rubber hot water bottle filled with warm (not hot) water or a medicinal chest rub may also relieve symptoms

For further information: [Staying Healthy in Child Care](#)