

When should I seek further help?

No guide can be complete. **If you are still worried about your child after reading this leaflet then you should get advice.** This could be telephone advice or a consultation with a doctor or nurse at your surgery. Telephone advice is also available from NHS direct and out-of-hours services (see contact numbers on the back of this leaflet). **If you feel that it is an emergency you should dial 999 for an ambulance.**

The following are signs of possible serious illness:

- Your child is **drowsy or irritable**. (Although children with a temperature are often more sleepy, irritable and lacking interest than usual, they usually improve after treatment with paracetamol and / or Ibuprofen. If they do not improve, or if they are very drowsy indeed, they should see a doctor urgently).
- Your child has **problems breathing** - including rapid breathing and being short of breath or 'working hard' to breath. (It sometimes looks as though the tissues between the ribs and below the ribs get sucked in each time they breath). Any child who has a lot of difficult breathing needs to see a doctor urgently.
- **Cold or discoloured hands or feet** with a warm body
- Severe **arm and/or leg pains** (for no obvious reason)
- **Unusual skin colour** (pale, blue or dusky around lips)
- **High temperature** (40 C or higher) (not necessarily a sign of serious infection, but if the temperature does not come down with treatment or your child has other features on this list then you should seek help).
- An **infant who is not feeding** or any child that is showing signs of **dehydration** (see page 5).

Symptoms related to meningitis:

- Unusually severe headache
- A stiff neck (difficult putting chin to chest)
- Dislike of bright lights
- A rash that does not fade with pressure (see page 8)

Other symptoms that should be assessed by a GP:

- A cough lasting more than 3 weeks (or sooner if becoming breathless more easily or there is a family history of asthma).
- A fever for 24 hours or more with no other sign of infection (cough, runny nose, earache etc.)
- Your child loses weight and does not re-gain it within two weeks in an under 5 year old, or within four weeks in an older child.