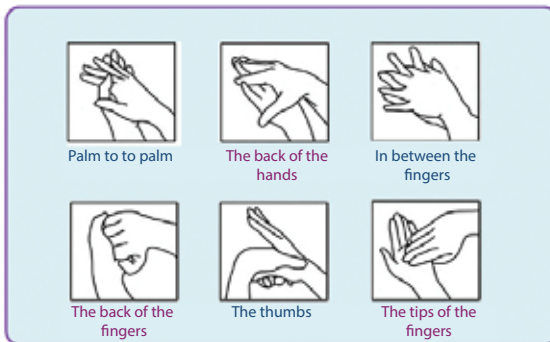


Can URTIs be prevented?

Prevention is difficult. Many germs (viruses) can cause a URTI and many viruses that cause URTI's are in the air, which you cannot avoid. The risk of spreading URTI may be reduced by:

1. People in the household should wash their hands frequently with soap and water.

The 6 Steps of Hand Washing



2. Avoid sharing towels, flannels, toys etc.
3. Cover mouth/nose when coughing

When to seek medical advice?

When there is a worsening of symptoms such as:

- Fast breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Becoming drowsy/tired
- Laboured breathing/sucking in of chest wall
- Any other symptoms that you are concerned about

Please contact your GP or Public Health Nurse or the ward if you have any concerns

Record of useful telephone numbers/information:



CUH Children's wards

-  Puffin Ward: (021) 4922 212/ (021) 492 2206
-  Ladybird Ward: (021) 492 2389/ (021) 492 2209
-  Seahorse Ward: (021) 492 2187
-  Paediatric Assessment Unit : (021) 492 2187

*Developed by: Sinead Connery and Michelle Horgan
(Children's and General Nursing Interns)
in conjunction with
staff on Ladybird Ward.
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correct at time of development.*

Discharge Advice: Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)

Information for
patients/parents/guardians



What is an upper respiratory tract infection (URTI)?

It is a mild infection of the upper airways.

URTI includes:

- The common cold
- Laryngitis (infection of voice box/larynx)
- Tonsillitis/pharyngitis
- Acute rhinitis (runny nose)
- Acute rhinosinusitis (infection of sinuses)
- Acute otitis medial (ear infection)

These conditions usually stop on their own. They are extremely common, a young child can expect about 3-8 colds per year. Children tend to get more UR-TIs than adults because they have not yet built up their immunity to the many viruses that can cause these infections

How does a URTI spread?

Upper respiratory tract infections are usually caused by viruses (germs). There are over **200** different types of viruses that can cause a URTI.



What are the symptoms of a URTI?

Common symptoms are:

- Sore throat and cough. Occasionally, vomiting may follow a bout of coughing
- Hoarse voice (caused by laryngitis)
- Nasal irritation and congestion may interfere with feeding, breathing and sleep-particularly in babies.
- There may be a lot of nasal discharge which is usually clear at first, but becomes thicker and darker as the infection progresses.
- Sneezing
- Fever
- A general feeling of tiredness and weakness, being unwell, restlessness/irritability.



What is the duration of a URTI?

The symptoms usually start suddenly, reaching their peak after 2-3 days. In older children, symptoms tend to last about a week but the cough can last 3-4 weeks. In younger children, symptoms typically last 10-14 days.

What are the complications?

The most common complications include:

- Bronchiolitis (chest infection) and croup in very young children and babies
- Ear infection in younger children
- Sinusitis and chest infections in older children
- Asthma symptoms may worsen, with an increased cough and wheeze.



What is the treatment for URTIs?

There is usually no need for any treatment as children usually get better on their own.

The most appropriate management includes: Comfort measures and rest. Adequate fluids should be given. Give your child regular drinks throughout the day.

Paracetamol or ibuprofen may be given for pain and fever. Some relief from symptoms can be achieved by saline drops in the nose for congestion.

What about antibiotics?

Antibiotics are usually ineffective for URTIs. URTIs are usually caused by viruses and antibiotics can cause adverse effects, for example, diarrhoea, vomiting and rash. As with all medicines, there is a risk of side effects.