

# Is It a Cold?

It can be difficult for a child to express his or her symptoms when he or she is sick. Read on for some tips to help you determine if your child could be experiencing more than just a common cold.

**B**ronchitis, which typically develops after a cold, is an inflammation of the lining of the bronchial tubes, which carry air to and from the lungs. When these tubes become irritated, they produce mucus, making breathing difficult. Bronchitis can be either acute or chronic and is commonly diagnosed from its symptoms, although other tests may be done to rule out asthma.

Hospital. "Acute bronchitis usually develops from a cold or other respiratory infection, and is usually a mild condition. Treatment is centered around relieving symptoms. In many cases, antibiotic treatment isn't necessary as most infections are caused by a virus."

**To schedule an appointment with a physician at St. Louis Children's Hospital, visit [StLouisChildrens.org](http://StLouisChildrens.org).**

## SYMPTOMS OF ACUTE BRONCHITIS MAY INCLUDE:

- chest discomfort
- chills
- cough: may be dry, nonproductive in the early stages then becomes mucus filled
- fatigue
- fever
- shortness of breath

## WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Though acute bronchitis typically goes away on its own, you will want to see a doctor if your child experiences a cough severe enough to prevent him or her from playing or sleeping, a fever that persists for more than three days, or if you have concerns.

"In children, the most common cause of bronchitis is a virus, although it can also be caused by bacteria," says Judy Ward, RN, staff nurse at St. Louis Children's



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## When Your Child Has Mononucleosis How would you know if your child had it?

**M**ononucleosis is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, which generally produces minimal symptoms in children until adolescence.

"This infection can be asymptomatic or result in a mild illness that may be indistinguishable from other childhood illnesses," says Rachel C. Orscheln, MD, infectious disease physician at St. Louis Children's Hospital. "When the infection occurs in adolescents, it results in mononucleosis 30 to 35 percent of the time."

### SYMPTOMS OF MONONUCLEOSIS

A variety of symptoms can occur after an incubation period of four to eight weeks, including:

- fatigue
- fever
- headache
- loss of appetite
- sore throat
- swollen lymph nodes
- weakness

"If symptoms worsen after a child has been diagnosed with mononucleosis, parents should seek medical attention" says Dr. Orscheln. "A bacterial infection can result in complications, so if your child

is unable to eat or drink due to sore throat or swollen tonsils, immediate follow-up is necessary."

No specific therapy is used to treat mononucleosis, as antibiotic medications have no effect against viral infections. Children diagnosed with mononucleosis should rest and drink plenty of fluids.

**For referral to a pediatrician at Progress West HealthCare Center, visit [www.progresswesthealthcare.org](http://www.progresswesthealthcare.org), and click "Find a Physician."**



# Preparing for a Mature Role

Babysitting is a big responsibility. Before you allow your child to babysit, make sure he or she is prepared for what babysitting is all about.



The most important role of a babysitter is to ensure the safety of the child in his or her care. Here are some things you can do as a parent to prepare your teen for babysitting success:

- **Be a role model.** You should constantly model the behaviors that a babysitter is expected to display. Discuss with your teen how to make decisions related to child safety. Also, you can enroll your child in a basic lifesaving techniques course.
- **Practice responsibility.** Allow your child to make important decisions and become more responsible. For example, allow your child to check the neighbor's mail or walk their dog while they are out of town.
- **Offer guidance.** Give your child opportunities to interact with children at different stages of development—physical, behavioral, and cognitive. This could include interaction with cousins or neighbors in an unstructured environment. Your child will learn ways to manage behaviors and emotions from your instruction and example.

For information on the Babysitting 101 classes offered at Progress West, visit [www.progresswesthealthcare.org](http://www.progresswesthealthcare.org) and click "Calendar of Events."



## Keep Your Child Safe

Did you know that children between the ages of 1 and 4 have the highest rate of unintentional home injuries?

Here are some ways to keep your child from getting hurt.

**W**hen you have a small child, make sure that heavy or potentially harmful objects your toddler might be curious about are out of reach. This includes household cleaners, medications, knives, or pots and pans.

### ON THEIR LEVEL

An electrical wall unit might not look like a threat from where you're standing, but if you get down on the floor, you can see how close it is to your child.

"It's a good idea to crawl around on the floor and look for safety hazards," says Sharon Rau, RN, community education instructor at St. Louis Children's Hospital. "You can see things that might be accessible to your child and be able to make them safer."

### SAFETY 101

St. Louis Children's Hospital offers a home safety consult program. During the course, parents are made aware of home accessories that might harm their children, such as the placement of furniture or dangling wires, and are able to try out a variety of home safety devices.

"Since every home is different, we take an individualized approach to inspecting your home and bringing safety devices that fit your lifestyle and will help keep your child from being hurt," says Rau. "Many parents like the hands-on approach since they might not be able to try out these products in some stores."

A safety checklist is also available for parents to use. "It's our responsibility to protect our children," says Rau. "Our homes should be made safe for them."

To print your own checklist, visit [StLouisChildrens.org](http://StLouisChildrens.org) and enter "Home Safety Checklist" in the search box.