

WHY...?

How LONG...?

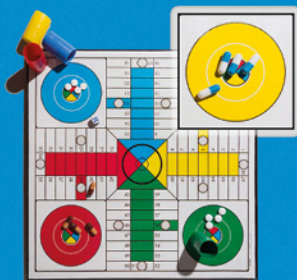
How...?

WHAT...?

HELP!

# Acute Bronchiolitis

Tomar Antibióticos



No es un juego



Región de Murcia  
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# What is bronchiolitis?

Bronchiolitis is a respiratory infection caused by viruses and in which bronchi and bronchioles become inflamed. It affects children under 2, especially children younger than 6 months.

The most frequent virus that causes bronchiolitis is RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), although there are some other viruses, such as the flu virus or the metapneumovirus. In our environment, RSV is more frequent from November to March.

Most children catch this virus in the first years of life, but only a few present bronchiolitis, with its gravity varying depending on different factors (prematurity, exposure to tobacco smoke at home, lack of breastfeeding, etc.).

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**It is spread by touching objects contaminated with the virus** (toys, dummies, etc.), where there could be some saliva or mucus droplets containing the virus, and then touching eyes, nose or mouth. It can also be spread by inhaling small droplets of fluid sprayed into the air when someone with the virus coughs or sneezes.

**How is it spread?**

At the beginning of the disease, children usually present cold with increased mucus and cough. After that, bronchioles become inflamed, complicating airflow through them. This could cause difficulty breathing (rapid breathing, ribs showing or moving abdomen too much) and “whistle” sounds or any other sounds when auscultating the child.

**What are the symptoms?**

As a result, some children may have difficulty feeding and, sometimes, may experience vomiting or choking.

Patients with bronchiolitis may experience fever, without needing antibiotics in the majority of cases.



## When should I see my paediatrician?

In case of suspecting that the child is breathing more rapidly or restless than usual, it is necessary that your paediatrician examines him/her.

**You must go to the doctor urgently if:**

- The child is breathing restless.
- Ribs are showed.
- The child rejects food or has difficulty eating.
- The child is too restless or too sleepy.
- The child has high fever.
- The child makes groan when breathing.
- The child's lips or nails are blue or he/she coughs.
- The child's breathing has pauses.

## Are some children most vulnerable than other children?

**Yes.** Premature children and children with health problems such as heart or lung diseases or immune deficiency. **In these cases, care must be taken to avoid bronchiolitis.**





This disease **can last from 8 to 10 days**, but cough can last up to 4 weeks occasionally, or even “whistle” sounds and difficulty breathing can appear again. Some children, after an episode of bronchiolitis, and especially during the first year after the disease, can have difficulty breathing when they get a cold. You should visit your paediatrician if your child has difficulty breathing or he/she presents any other warning symptoms aforementioned.

**How long does it last?**



## What treatments can I use at home?

Babies breathe through the nose principally and, if mucus block it, the child could have difficulty breathing. Thus, **before eating or sleeping, it is important to clear nasal cavities** with physiological saline solution. **Raising the head of the bed/cot can help your child breathe more easily.**

If the child has fever, you can **give him/her some antipyretics**, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen (the latter must not be given to a child younger than 3 months). Children with bronchiolitis often lack appetite, they get tired during breastfeeding, and they can experience vomiting and choking. In order to help them, **you can divide meals (give them less amount of food, but most frequently).**

Most of the medicines tested to cure bronchiolitis have not shown to improve symptoms. Do not use medicines if they have not been prescribed by your doctor.

## What medicines must NOT be used to treat bronchiolitis?

Cough syrup, mucolytics and nasal decongestants must not be used, as they can be harmful.



**No.** Bronchiolitis is caused by viruses, therefore, **antibiotics are not needed for its treatment.**

**Should we give antibiotics to children with bronchiolitis?**

Bronchiolitis is spread from one person to another, so people with respiratory infections, even if it is a common cold, **should wash their hands frequently, especially before and after touching a child or any of the objects he/she uses.**

**How can I prevent bronchiolitis?**

It is also important to avoid crowded places, especially those with many children (such as nursery schools and playgrounds).

**Exposure to tobacco smoke must be totally avoided.**

**Breastfeeding is recommended,** as children are more protected against bronchiolitis.

So far, there is no vaccine available to prevent this disease, although it is under research and development.





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