



# Rashes: When should you worry?

## Skin rashes are common in babies and children.

Most rashes are harmless and go away on their own. However, you should contact your GP if your child seems unwell, and has a rash and a fever.

- The causes of skin rashes tend to differ in babies compared to older children. Many viruses can cause a rash in addition to other symptoms such as fever and cough. The rash often varies in shape and size, usually appearing as blotchy red spots commonly affecting most of the body. They sometimes appear quite quickly and usually last for only a few days.

- **NHS information on common rashes in children** (including useful photographs if you are not sure what type of rash your child has) is available here:

<https://bit.ly/2Rq1iWz>

- A visual guide to common causes of nappy rashes in babies can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2Xlaj7d>

**\*\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** You should seek urgent medical help if your child's rash doesn't fade when you press a glass against it as this can be a sign of meningitis – information on how to do this is available here: <https://bit.ly/3ciH49q>

## What should you do?

- Some rashes require no medical input and simply get better by themselves without any treatment. This includes viral rashes.
- If your child has a fever, you may want to lower their temperature using [paracetamol](#) (Calpol) and/or [ibuprofen](#).

**\*\*Important Note** - Ibuprofen is not suitable for some children. Check with your pharmacist or doctor if your child:

- has had an allergic reaction to ibuprofen or any other medicines in the past
- has asthma
- has liver or kidney problems
- has a health problem that means they have an increased risk of bleeding
- has an inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis

- scientists are still learning about the best medication for children with COVID-19 and currently ibuprofen should only be used if recommended by a paediatrician/GP. Use paracetamol instead.
- Chickenpox and ibuprofen: do not use ibuprofen if your child has chickenpox, as it may cause serious skin infections. For more information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3eoauob>.

**More information on Page 2**

**For additional Parent Tips see [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)**

The information in this resource was updated on 14/04/2020 and will be reviewed again in 04/2022 and when new evidence becomes available.




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- Some rashes require you to keep your child off from nursery or school. This includes chickenpox and scarlet fever. For more information, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2Rodes6>
- However, some conditions like impetigo require treatment from your GP. Eczema is another condition which requires treatment, your health visitor will be able to help and support you with this.
- Children can recover from illness quickly but also can become more poorly quickly; it is important to seek further advice if a child's condition gets worse. Further information on common childhood illnesses and what to do if your child is unwell is available here: <https://bit.ly/2yJVctD>

## When should you worry?

 <b>RED</b>	<b>If your child has any of the following features:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is going blue around the lips</li><li>• Too breathless to talk / eat or drink</li><li>• Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to touch</li><li>• Becomes extremely agitated (crying inconsolably despite distraction)</li><li>• Is confused or very lethargic (difficult to wake)</li><li>• Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (the 'Glass Test')</li><li>• Develops swollen lips, a swollen tongue and is struggling to breathe</li></ul>	<b>You need urgent help.</b>  Go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999
 <b>AMBER</b>	<b>If your child has any of the following features:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develops a painful rash</li><li>• Develops a blistering rash</li><li>• Develops a rash affecting more than 90% of their body</li><li>• Has had chickenpox in the past few days and is now getting more unwell with a high fever and spreading red rash</li><li>• Develops red lips or a red tongue</li><li>• Develops significant skin peeling</li><li>• Is under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F, or 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F (but fever is common in babies up to 2 days after they receive vaccinations)</li><li>• Continues to have a fever above 38.0°C for more than 5 days</li></ul>	<b>You need to contact a doctor, nurse or health visitor today.</b>  Please ring your GP surgery, dial 111 or use NHS 111 online: <a href="https://111.nhs.uk/">https://111.nhs.uk/</a>
 <b>GREEN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If none of the above features are present, most children with fever and rash can be safely managed at home. Contact your health visitor to discuss your child's rash and for advice.</li><li>• If you think that this is a worsening of your child's eczema, optimise your child's eczema treatment or contact their GP or practice nurse.</li></ul>	<b>Self care</b>  Continue providing your child's care at home. If you are still concerned about your child, contact your health visitor, dial NHS 111 or use NHS 111 online: <a href="https://111.nhs.uk/">https://111.nhs.uk/</a>

## Acknowledgement:

The content of this Parent Tip advice sheet was developed by "Healthier Together" and adapted by the Institute of Health Visiting with permission from Dr Sanjay Patel. More information on the full range of Healthier Together resources and what to do if you are worried that your child is unwell are available here: <https://bit.ly/2yJVctD>

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