PRESS RELEASE

Not sure what to do if your child is unwell?

Parents and carers in mid Essex are being asked to make sure they know how to deal with common childhood winter illnesses as the cold weather continues.

Young children are more vulnerable to coughs, colds and infections because their immune system is still developing. While an adult may get two to four colds a year children can get eight to 12 colds in a year.¹

It can be difficult to know the best way to care for children when they become ill but Dr David Levy, Regional Medical Director for NHS England in Midlands and East, explains: “It is extremely worrying when your child becomes ill, particularly if they are very young and can’t always articulate exactly what is wrong.

“In almost all cases childhood illness can be managed at home with over-the-counter medication, hugs and rest.

“If your child has symptoms that worry you or that you’ve not seen before there are different options available. Your local pharmacist can advise on the appropriate over-the-counter medicines that are suitable for your child’s age. If your child is ill in the night then advice is available on www.nhs.uk or if you want to talk to someone, call NHS111.

“If your child needs more urgent medical attention please call your usual out-of-hours GP services via NHS111.”

NHS111 provides a single number for anyone in mid Essex to contact the out of hours GP. In a real emergency, you can visit accident and emergency or call 999.

Simple colds or bugs can be managed with pain relief, oral rehydration solution and cough mixture. A thermometer is always a good idea.

If your child has a tummy upset or flu it’s best to keep them away from elderly people and other children who can be vulnerable to infection. Children should be encouraged to wash their hands regularly, particularly after playing and going to the toilet, and
before they eat food, to help to reduce the spread of germs and keep down instances of diarrhoea and vomiting or norovirus.

For more advice on staying well this winter visit www.nhs.uk/staywell.

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http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Cold-common/Pages/Commoncoldinchildren.aspx