

Viral induced wheeze

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What is viral induced wheeze?

A wheeze is a high pitched sound that occurs during breathing. It can be associated with increased difficulty in breathing.

In viral induced wheeze the chest becomes wheezy and tight when the child has a viral infection (a cough, cold or chest infection). The wheezing episodes usually last two - four days but can be longer. The wheeze may return each time your child has a cold. Pre-school children are most likely to have viral induced wheeze.

Is it asthma?

Viral wheeze is similar to but different condition from asthma, but some children may go on to develop it when they are older. Children with asthma can get wheezy:

- During or after exercise
- At night or when waking
- After contact with a 'trigger' (pollen, pets, dust)
- When upset or laughing
- Occasionally for no apparent reason.

How is viral induced wheeze treated?

- Usually a reliever inhaler such as salbutamol (a blue-coloured inhaler) is prescribed to be given using a 'spacer'. The medicine in the inhaler relaxes the airway in the chest and makes it easier to breathe.
- If the children are very breathless a nebuliser is sometimes used to give the medicine as a mist breathed in from a mask.
- Sometimes two to three days of steroid tablets/liquid medicine are used to settle down the inflammation in the chest.
- Most children with viral wheeze will not need a regular 'preventer' inhaler.
- Antibiotics are ineffective against viruses so they are no use in viral wheeze. The illness will get better by itself once it has run its course.
- Oxygen may be administered via face mask or fine tubes into the nose.
- For babies they may require help with feeding and have a tube inserted via their nose that goes into the stomach. Milk may be given via this until the baby is able to feed again without getting breathless.

What do I do when discharged home?

You will be given a blue inhaler (salbutamol) and a spacer. You will also be given an asthma/wheeze weaning plan to use with the blue inhaler (salbutamol). Ward 10 staff will explain how to use the weaning plan before you go home. If your child does not respond to the plan and requires more inhalers frequently within four hours of the last dose given, please call ward 10 (if discharged within the last 48 hours).

For further advice, or if you are very concerned about your child's breathing, please call 999.

If after your 48 hours open access your child remains wheezy/breathless, please seek further medical advice from your GP/Out of hours.

Ward 10 telephone number: 01493 452010

Feedback


We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

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BEHAVIOURS:

- Courtesy and respect
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Responsive communication
- Effective and professional

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 The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

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