

Cough/breathlessness pathway for children aged up to 2 years

- Clinical support tool for assessment in Primary Care

Distinguishing Bronchiolitis from Viral Induced Wheeze will help identify children who are likely to benefit from inhaled bronchodilators (see table 1)

	Green – low risk	Amber – intermediate risk	Red – high risk
Colour Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal colour or skin, lips and tongue Alert, responds normally to social cues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pale or mottled Lethargic (wakes only after moderate stimulation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue or grey colour Unable to rouse, or wakes only after vigorous stimulation Confusion
Respiratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of amber or red symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RR 50-70 (<12 months) Mild / Moderate resp distress Audible stridor on exertion/distress only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RR >70 (<12 months) RR >40 (12-24 months) Sats <92% OR cyanosed Severe respiratory distress Grunting Audible stridor at rest
Circulation / hydration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of amber or red symptoms Able to tolerate some feeds / fluids Passing urine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cap Refill Time 2-3 seconds Cold hands and feet in absence of fever Reduced urine output 50-75% feed/fluid intake Unable to swallow saliva 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cap Refill Time >3 seconds <50% fluid intake
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None of amber or red symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever for ≥ 5 days Risk factors for severe disease – congenital heart disease, immunocompromised, chronic lung disease, age <6 weeks, Prematurity, Neuromuscular weakness Additional parental/carer support required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudden onset and parental concern about inhaled foreign body

GREEN ACTION

Provide safety netting advice.
Confirm they are comfortable with the decisions / advice given.
Consider referral to community nursing team if available

AMBER ACTION:

Follow condition specific pathway:
Probable bronchiolitis (younger, crackles, mild-mod resp distress):
Probable Viral Wheeze (older, wheeze, prolonged expiratory phase):
Probable croup (stridor, barking cough)

RED ACTION:

Follow condition specific pathway:
Probable bronchiolitis (younger, crackles, severe resp distress):
Probable Viral Wheeze (older, wheeze, prolonged expiratory phase):
Probable croup (stridor, barking cough)

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Table 1:

	Bronchiolitis	Viral Induced Wheeze
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most commonly <1. Can be up to 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1+
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often starts with coryza leading to cough and breathlessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often starts with coryza leading to cough and breathlessness
Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have tachypnoea and respiratory distress • Course bilateral scattered crackles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have tachypnoea and respiratory distress • Bilateral wheeze or crackles heard only on expiration • May have reduced air entry
Concerning features in history	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early on in illness (often gets worse over 3-4 days) • Under 6 weeks • Co-morbidities (congenital heart disease, immunocompromised, chronic lung disease, age <6 weeks, Prematurity, Neuromuscular weakness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous episodes requiring HDU/ITU care • Previous episodes requiring IV therapy
Treatment in primary care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Establish feed plan little and often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salbutamol up to 10 puffs up to 4 hourly • Prednisolone 1mg/kg OD for 3 days or Dexamethasone 0.3mg x 1 if history of atopy
Safety netting advice sheet	Bronchiolitis :: Healthier Together (what0-18.nhs.uk)	Viral induced wheeze :: Healthier Together (what0-18.nhs.uk)
Referral details for your local hospital	Hospital advice/referral contact details :: Healthier Together (what0-18.nhs.uk)	Hospital advice/referral contact details :: Healthier Together (what0-18.nhs.uk)