A Parent's Guide to Treating Childhood Illnesses

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Most parents find it difficult to cope when their babies or children become ill. It is an experience that is distressing, stressful and often tricky; this is further complicated by children being unable to clearly explain the symptoms they are suffering from, which make parents feel helpless and further fuel their anxiety. Dealing with your child's illness is an inevitable part of parenthood, and this article will provide you with some tips to look after your child during times of illness. Children suffer from a range of illnesses, but the good news is that a large number of these can easily be managed by you yourself at home. We shall discuss some of the things you should keep an eye out for when your baby becomes ill and how you can treat these, as well as the symptoms that should ring alarm bells in our mind so that you know when you need to seek urgent medical help.



Which of my baby's symptoms can I treat myself at home?

1. *Coughs and Colds:* It is common for babies and young children to get coughs and colds. This is because their immune systems are still developing when they are young and takes a few years to develop fully. Treat your little one symptomatically, and make sure they are getting plenty of Vitamin C.
2. *Teething Pain :* Teething is the time when a baby starts growing new teeth. This can be a painful time and your baby may cry more than normal during this time. Teething pain is nothing to be worried about, it is normal to have pain when one is growing teeth for the very first time. Some babies may develop a mild fever when they start growing their teeth, and this is nothing to be worried about.
3. *A high temperature:* A baby's normal body temperature is 37 degree Celsius. If your baby feels warm to the touch, make sure you measure your baby's body temperature regularly. If your baby has a temperature not more than 38.6 degree Celsius, then you can look after your baby at home; however, if it is higher, you should consult a paediatrician.
4. *Mild Diarrhoea:* If your baby has developed mild diarrhoea, you should use your own judgment to determine whether your child needs medical help. Normally, a baby who has 'mild' diarrhoea only requires some extra attention and lots of fluids, as diarrhoea can easily cause a baby or young child to become dehydrated. A dehydrated baby will be tired, have dry skin and sunken eyes. Dehydration can be dangerous if not treated early, so do make sure you child is getting enough water and salts during times of diarrhoea. Fruit juices, lime juice (with sugar) and Tang are good fluids to replace lost water and salts when suffering from diarrhoea.
5. *Earaches:* If you notice that your child is pulling at his/her ear a lot or complains of ear pain, he/she may be suffering from an ear infection. Ear infections are quite difficult to spot in children as there aren't many visible signs. Wait for a day or two, and the infection should resolve on its own. However, if your child develops a fever at the same time or there is a discharge from the ear, you should make an appointment to see the doctor as soon as possible. Most ear infections resolve within 2-3 days without medical treatment.