Common Childhood Illnesses

**Bronchiolitis (RSV)**

**What is Bronchiolitis?**
- A common illness affecting the tiny airways (bronchioles) that lead to the lungs
- The virus causes the airways to swell and fill up with mucus. This can make breathing more difficult
- Most often affects infants (during the first 2 years of life) and young children because their noses and small airways can become blocked more easily than those of older kids and adults

**What causes Bronchiolitis?**
- A viral infection, most commonly RSV (respiratory syncytial virus)
- Exposure to cigarette or marijuana smoke can increase a child’s risk for bronchiolitis

**Symptoms of Bronchiolitis**
- First symptoms are similar to the common cold: stuffy nose and congestion, runny nose, cough, fever
- After a day or two, cough becomes worse and wheezing develops
- Symptoms can last from 12 days to multiple weeks
- **Watch out for:** fast/shallow breathing, retractions (area between the ribs and neck sinks in when a child inhales) and nostril flaring (nostrils widen when breathing)

**Treatment for Bronchiolitis**
- Keep your child hydrated
- Humidifier: to help loosen mucus in the airway and relieve cough and congestion
- Bulb syringe: to clear nasal congestion
- Acetaminophen: if needed for fever symptoms
- Antibiotics will not be useful
- **Get immediate help if** your child is having difficulty breathing or if their lips or fingernails appear blue

**Viral Gastroenteritis**

**What is Viral Gastroenteritis?**
- A viral infection of your intestines (gut)
- Very common
- Spreads very easily

**What causes Viral Gastroenteritis?**
- Norovirus, Rotavirus (vaccines can prevent), Adenovirus, Astrovirus
- Not the flu, unless a child also has body aches, fevers and respiratory symptoms
Symptoms of Viral Gastroenteritis
- Watery diarrhea
- Abdominal pain/cramping
- Nausea or vomiting
- Sometimes fever

Treatment for Viral Gastroenteritis
- Keep your child hydrated to prevent dehydration
- Antibiotics won’t be useful
- *Get immediate help if* your child has severe dehydration (not urinating enough, lack of energy, dry mouth, sunken eyes or cheeks, no tears when crying)

Viral Upper Respiratory Illness (Viral URI)
What is a Viral Upper Respiratory Illness?
- A viral infection in the sinuses, nasal passages and/or the throat
- Most common in the fall and winter months
- Also called the “common cold”

What causes Viral Upper Respiratory Illness?
- More than 200 different viruses

Symptoms of Viral Upper Respiratory Illness
- Clear, runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough

Treatment of Viral Upper Respiratory Illness
- Keep your child hydrated
- Rest
- Antibiotics will not be useful
- *Seek medical treatment if* symptoms are getting worse after 7 days or your child has breathing difficulty, eye pain or severe head pain.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)
What is Pink Eye?
- Inflammation of the thin, clear tissue that lines the inside of the eyelid and the white part of the eyeball (conjunctiva)
- The inflammation makes blood vessels more visible and gives the eye a pink or reddish color
- Very common and spreads easily

What causes Pink Eye?
- Viruses (most often), bacteria, allergens (pet dander, dust mites), irritants (swimming pool chlorine)
- Some signs and symptoms are the same no matter the cause

Symptoms of Pink Eye
• Redness or swelling of the white of the eye or inside the eyelids
• Tearing
• Eye discharge
• Itchy, irritated eyes
• Crusting of the eyelids or lashes
• See a doctor if your child has: eye pain, difficulty seeing, very red eyes, symptoms that don’t improve or get worse
• Infants or newborns should see a healthcare provider immediately

Treatment of Pink Eye
• Cold compresses
• Antibiotics
• Allergy medication if caused by an allergen (something a child is allergic to)

Croup
What is Croup?
• Inflammation of the airways in children
• Causes breathing difficulties
• Affect children up to age 5
• Most often seen in the fall

What causes Croup?
• Infections cause the windpipe and voice box to become irritated and swollen
• The same viruses that cause the common cold

Symptoms of Croup
• “Barking” cough
• High-pitched, squeaky noise when breathing (stridor)
• Worse at night or when child is upset/crying
• Cold symptoms
• Watch out for: fast/shallow breathing, retractions (area between the ribs and neck sinks in when a child inhales) and nostril flaring (nostrils widen when breathing)

Treatment of Croup
• Try to keep your child calm, as crying makes symptoms worse
• Cool-mist humidifier
• Cool air
• Keep your child hydrated
• Rest
• Get immediate help if your child has pulling in of the neck and chest muscles when breathing, trouble breathing, or is pale/blueish around the mouth
Sources:
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