



NASAL CONGESTION | CHILDREN LESS THAN 18 MONTHS

Before consulting your doctor or the emergencies, proceed to the nasal cleansing of your child.

SYMPTOMS

Your child under 18 months of age:

- has a runny nose;
- is wheezing;
- has a slight but persistent cough;
- has a slight fever (more or less 38,5 °C, rectal thermometer);
- is drinking less than usual.

This may be a case of bronchiolitis.

BRONCHIOLITIS

Bronchiolitis is a viral infection that may occur in babies between 0 and 18 months of age. Such an infection generally disappears over time, after 7 to 10 days, with no antibiotic treatment.

However, you must ensure that the child's nasal secretions, which are secondary to the infection, do not interfere with your child's breathing and that the child can continue to drink as usual. The way to achieve this is to ensure proper nasal cleansing and adequate hydration.

Note that, although bronchiolitis is an infection that is very common among young children, other infections that cause nasal congestion may occur. **If your child is experiencing nasal congestion, it is important, in all cases, to cleanse the nasal passages regularly and properly.**

METHOD

Nasal cleansing

In the event of bronchiolitis or any other infection causing nasal congestion, it is important to cleanse the nose, i.e. to aspirate any secretions. Even if this makes your child unhappy, this must be done because young children only breathe through the nose.

We suggest that you watch our online video clips that demonstrate how to most effectively aspirate nasal secretions depending on the type of baby nasal aspirators that you have, at santeestrie.qc.ca/mouche-bebe.

It is vital that a baby's nose be aspirated regularly, especially before feedings, and ideally not immediately after drinking to prevent the child from throwing up.

Salt water drops

It is recommended that a few drops of salt water be put in your child's nostrils to loosen the secretions and facilitate nasal aspiration. Do this just before cleansing the nose or between nasal aspirations.

Commercially prepared saline solutions are available in spray format or in bottles with a dropper.

There is also the option of making your own solution using the following recipe.

Salt water solution: 2.5 ml (½ teaspoon) of salt (level full) in 250 ml (8 oz.) of water that has been boiled and then cooled to room temperature.

Hydration (feedings)

Very young children breathe solely through their noses. This means that children who are congested may become fatigued while feeding. However, it is important to keep the child properly hydrated despite nasal congestion and fever. Be careful: If your child cannot drink as much as usual, make sure you feed them more often, and less at a time.

You can check your child's state of hydration through the quantity of urine when changing diapers. The urine should not be too dark or bad-smelling.

Washing hands and surfaces

Viruses spread easily, making hand-washing essential for limiting transmission.

Carefully clean surfaces with which secretions may have come in contact, because viruses on these surfaces can remain active for a long time. Exercise caution!

WHEN TO GO TO THE DOCTOR

If your child has the following symptoms, it is recommended that you take them to your family physician or a medical clinic right away.

- Deterioration in the child's general condition or state of consciousness.
- Refusal to feed.
- Major reduction in quantity of urine, or the urine becomes quite dark and bad-smelling.
- Significant difficulty breathing.

Trust your judgment and don't hesitate to consult if you have the slightest doubt.

Authors

Dr. Sophie Laflamme, Pediatric intensivist, David Daniel, Clinical nurse

Unité de pédiatrie de l'Hôpital Fleurimont

Editing and layout

Service des communications

Direction des ressources humaines, des communications et des affaires juridiques

© Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Estrie-Centre hospitalier universitaire de Sherbrooke, 2017

santeestrie.qc.ca

November 2017 – 1-6-72095

REMINDER

- Watch the video clips that demonstrate how to aspirate nasal secretions with the four type of baby nasal aspirators, at santeestrie.qc.ca/mouche-bebe.
- Conduct nasal aspirations regularly, especially before feedings.
- Insert a few drops of salt water in your child's nostrils to loosen the nasal secretions, especially when they are very thick.
- Offer feedings more frequently, even if the quantity is less than usual.
- Check your child's hydration through the presence of urine when changing diapers.
- Wash your hands frequently and clean surfaces with which secretions may have come in contact.