

Bronchiolitis: Diagnosis and Treatment

With every breath your baby takes, the lungs pull air and oxygen into your baby's body. When they breathe out, the lungs push carbon dioxide out of their body.

This all happens inside a complex system of bronchial tubes that connect to smaller tubes called bronchioles. Oxygen-rich air travels through the bronchial tubes and into even smaller tubes called bronchioles.

Bronchiolitis is a serious lower respiratory illness. It often happens in children younger than 2 years old.

It causes the tiny bronchiole deep in the lungs to become swollen and irritated.

Lining the bronchial tubes are little hairs called cilia coated with a layer of mucus to catch and hold tiny particles. Your lungs act as filters protecting your body from harmful dust and germs you breathe in.

When you cough, sneeze or clear your throat, you move this material out of your body.

Because a baby's respiratory system is so small, the airways can quickly build up with mucus making it hard for your baby to breathe.

Bronchiolitis is caused by a virus, such as respiratory syncytial virus or RSV and influenza, and frequently occurs in the late fall to early spring.

Most of the time, you can take care of your child at home. Have your child drink a lot of fluids.

Because bronchiolitis is caused by a virus, antibiotics won't help it get better.

If your child is not getting better or has a hard time breathing, they may need to be in the hospital.

Because your baby's respiratory system is small and their immune system is still developing, infections can become serious fast.

Taking care of your child when they're sick can be scary. If you have any questions, you can always call your child's doctor.