

# Know the basics

## Being prepared and knowing the signs

Parents are usually good at noticing when something is wrong with their baby/ child from quite early on. It is normal to worry that you won't recognise the signs that your baby is unwell. Trust your instincts, you know your baby best.

Learn how to spot the signs of serious illness and how to cope if an accident happens. If you know the basics and you are prepared, you will find it easier to cope.

**Keep a small supply of useful medicines** in a **locked cabinet** or **somewhere up high** where a child cannot reach them. See box on the right, for things to have at home just in case. **Make sure you've got the right strength of medicine for the age of your child**, always follow instructions carefully and check use by dates. Read the label carefully. **Do not give aspirin to children under 16.**

**If your baby seems to have a serious illness get medical help straight away. Read information on CPR at [www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk](http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk)**

## Paracetamol and ibuprofen

Consider using either **sugar-free** paracetamol or ibuprofen for children with fever who appear distressed - as a general rule a temperature of over 37.5°C (99.5°F) - as these can help to reduce fever and distress. Treat them with either paracetamol **OR** ibuprofen in the first instance. It can take up to an hour for either of them to work. Paracetamol and ibuprofen should **NOT** be given together at the same time. However, if your child remains distressed before the next dose is due, then you may want to try a dose of the other medicine. Aspirin should not be given to children under 16 years of age.

## Pharmacist says

Keep a small supply of useful items. Include things like:

- Thermometer
- Plasters
- Liquid painkillers (e.g. paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- Barrier cream

## Antibiotics for children

Children don't often need antibiotics. Most childhood infections are caused by viruses. Antibiotics are medicines which kill bacteria. They work only against bacteria, not the viruses that cause the majority of sore throats, colds, sinus infections and bronchitis. For bacterial infections however, antibiotics work quickly and symptoms usually improve within 24-48 hours. Often children can feel completely better shortly after beginning the antibiotic course. To beat the bacterial infection, it is important that your child finishes the entire course as prescribed, even if your child seems better.