

Media release

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For immediate release

NHS South Kent Coast CCG gives winter advice for local parents

Autumn's almost here and with it, the coughs and colds we associate with colder weather.

But did you know there is a rapid rise in the number of children rushed to hospital for asthma in September?

NHS South Kent Coast Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is supporting the Asthma UK's 'Teach Asthma a Lesson' campaign by providing parents across the area with advice on how to reduce their child's chances of having a bad asthma attack.

The Asthma UK campaign is urging parents whose children suffer from asthma to use the resources it has on its website such as sticker charts to monitor their child's asthma and manage it. The resources and further advice are available from <http://www.asthma.org.uk/advice-children-and-asthma>

Advice includes:

- Check out www.nhs.uk for information on children's health and symptoms of common childhood diseases such as measles and chicken pox.
- Have a thermometer in the home and know how to check your child's temperature: 37.5C (99.5F) and over is a fever
- Have over-the-counter medicines such as liquid paracetamol and ibuprofen handy to bring down a fever
- Help your child recover from a cold or cough by making sure they drink plenty of fluids and get rest. Give them time to recover from a cold – seek advice if it lasts longer than 10 days
- If your child has a bad cough that won't go away, make a GP appointment

- If your child also has a high temperature and is breathless, they may have a chest infection – seek advice from a GP
- If a cough continues for a long time, especially if it's worse at night or is brought on by your child running about, it could be a sign of asthma.
- If you're worried about your child, trust your instincts and seek advice.
- Look out for symptoms that may be a sign of a more serious illness such as being unusually sleepy, not drinking for more than eight hours or having a rash that doesn't fade when a glass is pressed firmly against the skin.

NHS South Kent Coast CCG's clinical lead for child and maternal health, Dr Brighton Chireka, said: "As we enter autumn and winter, there will inevitably be a rise in coughs and colds. But it's important to remember that viral infections cannot be cured by antibiotics.

"Most children in the South Kent Coast area have at least eight or more colds each year, and the symptoms usually disappear within days.

"It is important that parents ensure that their children have enough fluids and rest to help their body fight off infections. The best defence against germs is good hygiene – so parents should also teach their children to wash their hands regularly."

Dr Chireka added: "Common sense should be applied. If a parent notices that a child seems very ill, or has a very high temperature which can't be reduced with off-the-shelf pain relief, they should seek medical help or advice. They simply need to call their GP practice or NHS 111 when the practice is closed."