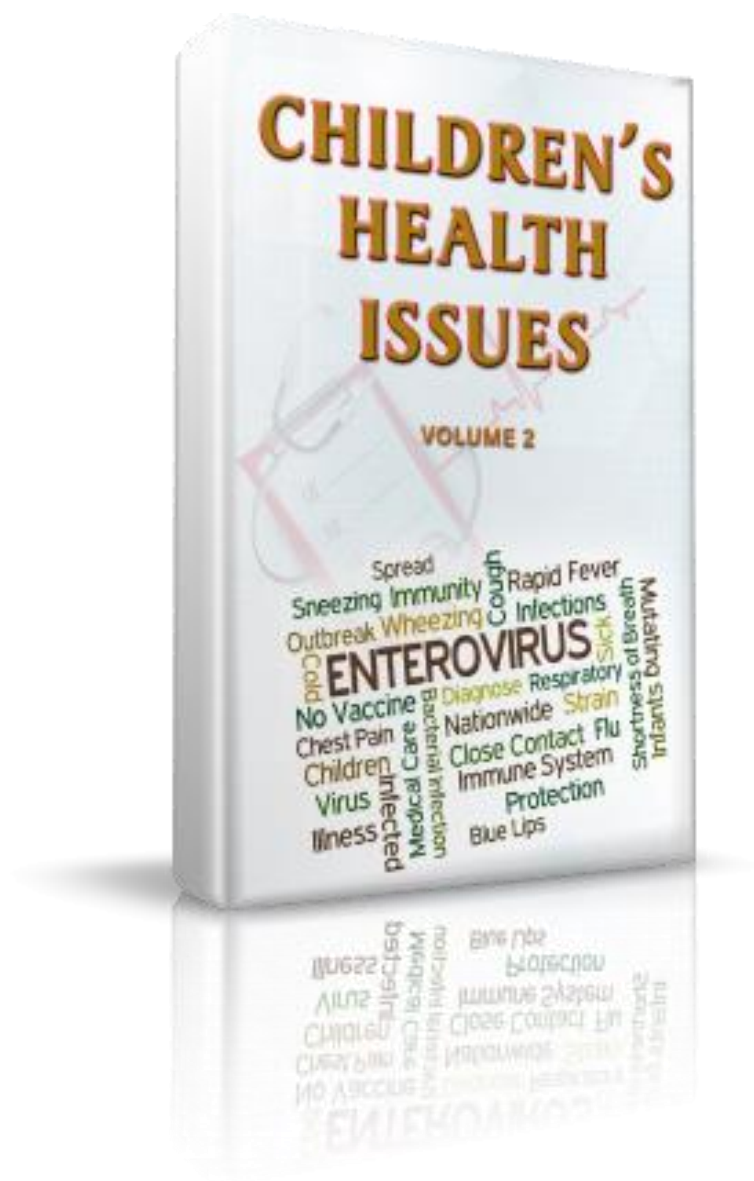


# CHILDREN HEALTH ISSUE

## VOLUME 2

### Special Report



Steven Spellborgh

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## Food Allergies in Kids



Food allergies are a common problem in kids. Nearly two million children have food allergies in the United States. Some food allergies are life threatening, even if the food is taken in very little quantity. Peanut tops the list of notorious foods which cause allergies. Following it are milk, especially cow's milk, soy, eggs, wheat, seafood and other nuts.

Food allergies are caused when the immune system is confused. The job of the immune system is to protect the body from diseases, bacteria, viruses and germs. The antibodies produced by the immune system helps to fight these minute external organisms which makes the person sick. But if the body is allergic to certain food, the immune system mistakes the food to a harmful foreign substance and takes action towards it thinking that it is dangerous to the body. The body acts adversely, when it isn't supposed to do so.

When the immune system detects allergic substance, the antibodies produce mast cells. They are a kind of immune system cell which release a chemicals, such as histamine, in the bloodstream. These chemicals affect the respiratory system, digestive system, nose, eyes, throat, and skin. Initial symptoms are runny nose, tingling sensation in the lips or tongue, and itchy skin rash like hives. The reaction can be mild to severe and depends on every individual. The symptoms can appear right after the food is consumed or after few hours. Other symptoms are cough, wheezing, nausea, hoarse voice, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach ache, and throat tightness.

A sudden and harsh allergic reaction is known as anaphylaxis. The patient encounters many problems, all at once which involve blood vessels, the heart, digestion, breathing, and skin. The blood pressure drops very steeply, the tongue swells and there is swelling in the breathing tubes. Patients who have such allergic reactions should be ready to handle emergencies. They should always carry some type of medicine which will help to combat or reduce the adverse affect of the food.

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Most of the times, it is very easy to detect the cause of food allergy. Problems such as hives begin to surface as soon as the child eats the substance he is allergic to. At other times, it becomes very difficult to determine the cause of allergy. In such cases, everything should be observed under close surveillance. Food items which are made out of many ingredients should be thoroughly checked for the allergic cause. Most of the times, allergies are inherited from other family members or other kids born with food allergies. Changes in the surroundings and the body play a major role in these kinds of cases. Some of the kids aren't actually allergic to the food and show only mild reaction. Like people who are lactose intolerant suffer from diarrhea and belly pain after consuming milk and dairy products. This is not an indication that the child is allergic to milk. This reaction happens because their body is incapable of breaking down the sugars which are found in dairy products and milk.

If the conditions are severe, a doctor should be consulted immediately. If food allergy is diagnosed, the doctor refers to an allergy specialist. The doctor asks questions like eating patterns, past allergic reactions and the time period between the consumption of food and the surfacing of the symptoms. The specialist can also ask about allergy related conditions like asthma or eczema and whether allergic reactions are hereditary. Usually skin test and blood test is done to test the antibodies and the reaction they have on the skin when it is exposed to the allergic substance.

Kids who are allergic to egg and milk outgrow them as the age progresses. But allergies which are severe and are related to items such as peanut, shrimps, and some kind of fish, last for a lifetime. Other than food, children can be allergic to certain medicines and flower pollen. The best way to avoid allergies is to avoid the cause of it. No specific medicine has been developed for the cure of allergies.

## Frequent Headaches and Migraine in Children

Children who get frequent headaches and migraine attacks have chronic illness. Such children and their parents face problem to adjust with school and their rules. Extra preparations and steps should be taken to cope with such illness. Pediatric specialist in migraine and headaches exist should be consulted for treatment and other precautionary & preventive measures. Also the triggers vary from child to child, which should be recognized accurately.



Firstly, it is the strict attendance rule in most of the schools that children with chronic illness find it difficult to deal with. To add to it, majority of the schools have zero tolerance policy regarding medications, even including over the counter medicines. Reports of students getting expelled for merely carrying Advil in

school with them are common. Prior to making appointment with the doctor, it is recommended that parents read the policy of the school the child is attending. It is good to ask questions before hand, than feeling sorry later. Some of the schools asks for letter or medical record as a proof, in case the student didn't attend because of a health problem. Some schools consider sick leaves as regular leaves and in this case, the attendance gets affected greatly.

School nurses can be given the prescribed medicine so that they can give the medicine to the child at the required time. If this is the case, things such as medicine storage location and availability of substitute should be checked. Apart from not attending regularly, the child can sometimes be unable to take part in co-curricular activities especially physical education and outdoor recess. Other possible options should be discussed with the teacher. Usually a recommendation letter from the physician will do the needed. In all the cases, some kind of medical identification can be carried by the child at all times. If the child is attending an after school babysitter or program, directly after school, extra measures should be taken. The babysitter or program in charge should be told about the problem in advance. Their cooperation can be asked for timely administration of the medicine and for taking special care of the child. If the child himself is grown enough to understand the matter, the child should be educated about taking medications. They should also be made to understand that it is harmful to take medicines from any un-trustable source even if their fellow students do. Budge them to ask questions and clarify any of their fears of concerns.

Most of the children lack the ability to convey their problem properly. The situation is further aggravated because of different kinds of headaches. They can be related to chronic illness, tension, sinus or fever. Only diagnosis can bring out the correct problem. If the rate of headache becomes more frequent, like more than twice a month, doctor's appointment should be taken instantly. Younger kids find it more difficult to explain the

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problem. If they become cranky, restless, irritating, tired, is having sleeping disorders and is not eating properly, a problem surely exists. Most of the children complain of headaches during exams because of increased stress. Seventy five percent of the children experience headaches because of tension. If so, stress management education, along with counseling, should be given to the kid.

Headaches can be an indication of other problems, too. So, thorough diagnosis is highly recommended. The child's previous medical history provides important clue. Prior to the doctor's appointment, notes can be made after referring the medical history. Maintaining a log about the child's headache frequencies, pain location, time of occurrence, symptoms, etc. also helps. If not due to illness, headaches can also be a result of head injury. Sometimes, headache can be hereditary, like in the case of migraines.

Headaches can also be caused because of infections, vision problems, odd levels of blood pressure, neurological problems, muscle weakness, improper ear balance or serious problems such as tumor, blood clots, etc. If the doctor is not able to diagnose the problem, he/she can refer the child to a headache specialist or neurologist. Test such as CT scan or MRI are done if there is a serious problem. After the diagnosis, the doctor prescribes medication or will ask to take over the counter medicines. According to a study, children who face headaches and migraine take overdose of over the counter medicines for immediate pain relieving. In some of the cases, the parents are clueless about this situation. This practice is risky and mostly children above six years are involved in such cases.

## Motion Sickness in Children



Children usually feel sick in the stomach when travelling in a car, airplane, boat or train. This sickness is known as motion sickness. This sickness is caused by reception of wrong signals by eyes, muscles, skin receptors, and inner ears.

While travelling, different body parts send different signals to the brain. Eyes see things around and it sends signals about the direction of movement while in motion. The joint sensory receptors and muscles

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send signals about the movement of the muscles and the position in which the body is. The skin receptors send signals about the parts of the body which are in contact with the ground. The inner ears have a fluid in the semicircular canals. This fluid senses motion and the direction of motion like forward, backward, up, down, circular, or to and fro. When the brain gets timely reports from the various body parts, it tries to find a relation between all the signals and then sketches a picture about the body's movement and position at a particular instant. But when the brain isn't able to find a link and isn't able to draw a picture out of the received signals, the condition called motion sickness is experienced.

For example, if a child is riding in a car and reading something at the same time, the eyes will see stationary book. But the skin receptors and the inner ears will sense the body moving in a forward direction. The eyes and the muscle receptors will send signals that the body is not moving. This confuses the brain and everything is jumbled up in the head. This makes the child dizzy, sick in the stomach and even tired. There is a possibility of the child throwing up, so it is recommended that the parents carry a sick bag each time they are travelling with kids. And if the child is feeling anxious or scared, the condition can deteriorate further.

Although there are medicines available over the counter to deal with motion sickness, some measures should be taken to avoid medicine and also motion sickness. The child should always be made to sit facing in the forward direction. He/she should not face or sit backwards, nor should he be made to sit in a seat facing backwards. This helps the ears and the eyes to send similar kind of signal. It is good if the kid isn't involved in some kind of activity like reading, playing video games or something which is stationary. He/she must be asked to look outside, especially at things which are located at a distance. The same applies when travelling in an airplane. When travelling in a boat, the child can go to the upper deck and look at the horizon. Basically, the child must be made to concentrate at things which are located at a distance and are in motion. When looking at something stationary, the eyes get confused and send wrong signals.

It also helps to sit in a place which is moving the least. Usually, it is the center point of the body, so the more close the child sits to the center, the better. Like when in an airplane, it is good to sit in seats in the middle aisle and not in those which are located near the wings. If the child is sitting in the center of the boat, instead of the front or the side, the lesser seasick the child will feel. In spite of all these measures if the child is still feeling sick a doctor should be consulted. The doctor checks the inner ears for any defect. He will also check other body parts which are responsible for sensing motion. Apart from medicine, pressure bracelets are also available at the local pharmacy. And

along with carrying a sick bag or any other plastic bag, the car can be pulled over and the child should be walked out a bit to feel better.

## Pains during Growth in Children



Growing pain is part and parcel of the growing phase in a child's life. When the child stops growing so will the growing pain and when adolescence is reached, they disappear completely. Growing pain can occur between three to five years or eight to twelve years of age. Growing pains are usually experienced in the legs usually in the calves, in the area in front of thighs and behind the knees. The pain starts either in the afternoon or night, just before bedtime. The child can go to bed pain free, but can wake up in the middle of the night complaining of throbbing pain in

the legs. But the good part is that these pains vanish by morning. About twenty five to forty percent of the children are known to experience growing pain.

Growing pains are experienced in the muscle region and not around the bones or joints. One of the major reasons of getting growing pains is because of the strenuous activities of the kids during the day. All the jumping around, running and climbing make the muscles tired. But no evidence has been collected which can prove that the growing pain is caused by bone growth. Growing pains are also known to be caused by spurt of growth. This happens because the tendons or the muscles are too tight and do not synchronize with the growing of the bones. As a results muscle spasms are caused which last for less than fifteen minutes. The child usually gets pain in both the legs and not just one. And usually, growing pains do not get accompanied with redness, swelling or fever. The pain should be over by morning and if it is still persisting after the awakening of the kid, the problem could be related to something else and more serious.

If the pain is unbearable, the parent or caretaker should administer pain relieving medications which are available over the counter such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.

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Aspirin should not be given to children as they have a tendency to develop a very serious illness known as Reye Syndrome. Heating pads can be placed on the region that is hurting to ease the pain. Massage can also be given by the parent or the child can do stretching exercise to help the muscles relax. If the child develops fever, redness, swelling, tenderness, limitation in movement, or if the child limps while walking, the doctor should be approached. Before that the parent can do a little diagnosis of the intensity of the pain by feeling around the area and observing the pain experienced by the child. The pain shouldn't be so intense that the child is abstained from normal routine such as walking, running or playing.

The doctor conducts the diagnosis of exclusion to understand the problem. According to this diagnosis, it is not made until all the conditions are checked before considering growing pains. The doctor studies the child's medical history and conducts a physical examination. In some serious cases, the doctor advises to go for X-ray or blood test before the final decision is made.

Children can prevent the growing pains by doing stretching exercises on a daily basis. The exercise need not be complex. Even if the pain subsides, the exercise should be continued so as to keep the tendons and muscles relaxed and to adjust with the growth spurt. Fluids, when taken in good quantity, decrease the cramping. For this reason, the child should be given tonic water or quinine before going to bed.

## Pinworms in Children

Pinworms develop as a result of unhygienic habit of not washing hands before having food. They are small worms who resemble to small thread pieces and cause itching in the anus area. Pinworms infect humans only and reside in the intestines. Every school going kid encounters this problem at one time or the other. They can touch another kid infected with pinworm or an object having the eggs of the pinworm.

The eggs of the pinworm's eggs get on the fingernails and that why it is a good idea to wash the hands regularly. If the food is eaten without washing hands, these eggs go inside the body, by the digestive system. In the small intestine, the eggs hatch and the pinworms move towards the large intestine. There, they cling onto the walls of the intestine and stay there for few weeks to mature. After that the female pinworms go towards large intestine's end to lay eggs near the anus region. Usually the eggs are laid at night and that is the time when the area itches. It takes one to two months time period after the consumption of the eggs, for the maturing of the pinworms who lay new eggs.

The eggs get hatched on the anus's skin and the baby pinworms will crawl inside the body in order to grow.

Pinworms eggs are found anywhere like on the kitchen counter, school desk or bed. They are also found on utensils, clothes and towels. When outside the human body, the eggs can live up to two weeks. Within that time period when they are touched, there is a chance to enter the human body and flourish. Pinworms are contagious and can spread from one human to another. Also they can spread by air as the eggs are lightweight and the wind can blow them and they can be breathed in or swallowed by anyone. The child can intake more eggs when he scratches his bottom and doesn't wash his/her hands immediately.

Children infected with pinworms can see worms in their stool after they pass and even on the underwear. The worms look like small white threads. But the eggs aren't visible to the naked eyes. If the child observes these symptoms he/she should inform the adults about the condition. The itching caused by pinworms can be so bad that it can wake the child in the middle of the night and make him/her squirm. The doctors usually prescribe some medicine to kill the pinworms. The doctors also take samples from underneath the fingernail and the anus to check for eggs. The medicine will take about two weeks to get rid of the worms completely. If the itching is very irritating and wakes the child in the middle of the night, a cream is prescribed by the doctor. Sometimes other members of the house will also be asked to take the same medicine as a precautionary measure. The parents should wash all the clothes, towels and sheets used by the pinworm infected child.

The best way to deal with pinworms is taking precautionary steps in the first place. The child must cultivate a habit of washing hands before eating food, after using the bathroom and after playing outdoors. The fingernails should also be clipped regularly to not to allow eggs depositing there. The eggs also hang onto clothes, so it is a good habit to change underwear daily. And other clothes should be washed after every few days.

## Pneumonia in Children

Pneumonia is the infection of the either one lung or both. When both the lungs get infected it is known as double pneumonia. When the pneumonia is mild enough that the visit to the doctor can be avoided and the child can carry out daily activities normally, it is known as walking pneumonia.



The lungs are an important part of the respiratory system. The air which is breathed in contains oxygen, which is filtered by the lungs. This oxygen then is carried around the body with the help of blood which is passed from the breathing tubes by the alveoli. Capillaries or the minute blood vessels are surrounded by small air sacs known as alveoli. There are over six hundred million alveoli in the human body.

The air which is taken in is supplied to the alveoli; the oxygen extracted from the air is dissolved in the blood. Then it is the job of the red blood cells to distribute the oxygen to all the body parts. Oxygen is vital in the proper functioning of the human body and insufficient supply of oxygen can damage the organs and sometimes can be life threatening. This functioning is disturbed when the lungs get infected by pneumonia.

Pneumonia does not allow the lungs to function properly, because the infection produces fluid which obstructs the alveoli. In turn the oxygen does not penetrate deep inside the lungs and lesser oxygen is supplied to the blood. The breathing is affected and the condition worsens when both the lungs get infected with pneumonia.

People of all ages from infants to old could get affected with pneumonia. It is a myth among people that getting wet makes the person catch pneumonia. But it is actually the virus or the bacteria which causes the infection. When a person infected with flu or cold faces a deterioration in his/her condition, he/she can be infected with pneumonia. This happens because the irritation caused by the flu or cold helps the pneumonia germs to get into the lungs easily and move around to spread the infection.

The virus or bacteria which cause pneumonia can cause damages, whose severity can depend on the health of the child. If the infection is caused by bacteria, the child will get sick very soon and can get high temperature fever accompanied with chills. Pneumonia caused by virus develops very slowly and it takes longer time to go away. The child can also experiences cough, chest pain, headache, and or muscle ache. It can also make it difficult to breath, so the child will start to breath faster which may make him cough out gloppy mucus. The child would have to totally abstain from eating.

When given the right treatment, the child can recover fully. The doctor will first examine the heartbeat and breathing with the help of the stethoscope. The stethoscope also helps to check the lungs, the sounds made by the lungs help to determine if it contains any fluids. Sounds such as crackling or bubbling are indications of pneumonia. Chest X-ray will be taken too. White patchy area will show fluid buildup. By looking at the X-ray, the doctor can also determine whether the infection is caused by bacteria or virus. If it is caused by bacteria, antibiotics will be prescribed. And if it is difficult for the child to swallow the medicine or to retain it inside, he/she will be injected with IV fluid. And if virus is responsible for the infection, antibiotics won't work. Fever reducers, along with cough medicine, will be given in this case. The medicines will be of no use, if the child doesn't take adequate rest and plenty of liquids.

Shots can be taken to prevent pneumonia. These series of shots are called pneumococcal. Regular flu shots can also prove helpful, especially for kids who have asthma or other kinds of lung infection. Rest and sleep also strengthens the immune system. Washing hands regularly can keep harmful germs at bay.

## Poison Ivy and Children

Summer camps and family hiking sessions can sometimes result in children getting itchy rashes. To be blamed are plants such as poison ivy, poison sumac and poison oak. All of them produce the same substance or oil, called urushiol, which cause rashes. Urushiol is colorless and even odorless and is present within the leaves. Poison ivy can even grow in the backyards and parks. So any kind of outdoor activity should be monitored and the lawn should be de-weeded periodically. Bushes should be checked, as they grow as a regular plant and the child would not be able to distinguish the poisonous plant from the regular one.

Precaution is better than cure. Children should be educated and made to understand the description and ill-effects of poison ivy. They come in wide range and some change the appearance depending on seasonal variations. Urushiol is released from the leaves only when the leaves are damaged like when they are torn, get bumped or are brushed. The moment the leaf is damaged, urushiol is released and the skin is affected immediately. Also, what many people do not know that to get a rash by poison ivy is not only by coming directly in contact with the plant. Human and animal carriers of urushiol can affect people coming in contact with them. The leaves of the plant can be blown by the air, which can cause damage when those leaves are handled or burned with the rest of the leaves and twigs.

Once the children are made familiar with the plants, they should be asked to steer clear on the sight of the plant or leaves. Parents should avoid places where there are possibilities of growth of such plants. When going on camps, etc., children should not be dressed in short sleeves and short length pants, so that the body does not brush off such plants. In spite of taking all these precautions, if the child comes in contact with such plants and contact with urushiol is suspected, the area should be washed with water and disinfectant. It is best to take shower and clean the whole body and the clothes should be removed immediately and washed. Pets should also be bathed after their outdoor adventures.

Basically, the urushiol causes an allergic reaction which irritates the skin and that is the reason why it is known as an allergen. This allergen won't harm all, but eighty percent of the victims get skin irritations. It not only creates itchy rashes, but can also swell the skin. The time period for the symptoms to surface is few hours to five days. The rash usually takes one to two week to heal completely. First the skin swells and rash develops. Blisters can also form as a result of regular rubbing of the skin to get rid of the itch. The blisters will form a crust after some days and will flake off.

If the rashes are accompanied with fever, a pediatrician should be contacted for appointment. And if the case isn't that serious, the doctor recommends home remedies. The child would be asked to be given showers with cold water and calamine lotion would have to be applied. If the redness and itching is intense, fluid medicine along with pills are administered to the kid. Antihistamine is very popular in such cases. Steroids are prescribed by the doctor.

## Sinus and Sinus Attack in Children

Sinus might seem like common cold at first. The child coughs, sneezes and gets a red nose, like in cold. But the difference is that sinus attack last longer than common cold. Sinuses are spaces in the bones of the face and the head which are filled with air. They are exactly located on both sides of the nose, behind the nasal cavity, within the forehead, and at the back & in between the eyes. Sinuses grow in pairs and there are four pairs of them. Sinuses begin to develop in the mother womb and grow till twenty years of age. As children have an incompletely developed immune system, they catch cold infection more frequently.



The actual purposes of the sinuses are not known, but scientists say that they make the head lightweight as these air pockets are filled with light air. If these air pockets were to be replaced with something solid, the head will become heavier. The sinuses also provide tone and depth to the voice. That is the reason why the voice sounds funny when a person catches a cold or gets a sinus attack. The sinuses are covered with a thin and moist tissue layer known as a mucous membrane. These membranes are responsible for adding moisture to the air breathed in. They also produce mucus, a

sticky liquid filled in the nose, also called snot. This sticky liquid catches germs and dust, which are carried by the air, before they enter the body. The mucus membranes are covered with cilia or microscopic hair. These cilia move to and fro to encourage the flow of the mucus out of the nose and back inside. When the sinuses are infected, the membranes produce more mucus and become swollen and irritated.

When a person catches cold, the virus harms the cilia and the mucus doesn't get swept back in. This is how a runny nose is developed. The mucus lining swells within the nose. This narrows or completely blocks the minute opening of the sinus into nose. Because of this, the stickier and thicker mucus produced get trapped in the sinuses. This stagnant mucus becomes the breeding ground for virus, bacteria and fungi. If the common cold stretches for over two weeks, the sinusitis condition develops. This condition is sinus infection. Acute sinusitis is sinusitis stretching over two weeks or so. But when it crosses three months, it is called chronic sinusitis. The child can get mild fever along with acute sinusitis. There is no fever associated with chronic sinusitis and the symptoms are less intense. The symptoms of sinusitis or sinus attacks are mild fever, bad breath, continuous nasal discharge, puffy eyes, and daytime cough. Some children also experience low energy, crankiness, headache and pain behind the forehead, cheeks and eyes.

When the doctor is approached for help, he/she will check throat, nose and ears for infection. The sinuses are also checked. The doctor will press or tap on the cheeks and forehead. If bacteria are responsible for causing the infection, the child will be given

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antibiotics to kill the bacteria. The antibiotics will show their effect within few days itself. A nasal spray or decongestant can also be used to treat blocked and runny nose. If it is chronic sinusitis, the antibiotics need to be taken for a longer time period, like for about a few weeks, in order to kill the bacteria completely. The child shouldn't stop the course of medicine if he/she isn't seeing any improvement in the condition. The doctor should be contacted for further instructions. In this case, a surgery is an alternative. The doctor will ask the child to get a CT scan of the sinuses.

The best thing about sinusitis is that it isn't contagious. So if a kid is infected with it, he/she can still go to school and have fun with the rest of the kids. But kids who have sinus problem should stay away from environmental pollutants and allergies, which can trigger the condition again in them.

## Stomach Flu in Children



Stomach flu or gastroenteritis is a kind of infection in the digestive system, especially the stomach and intestines. Causes for this condition are parasite, bacteria, or virus infection spread through contaminated food and fluids. It can also be caused by certain toxins present in some plants & seafood, usage of powerful laxatives in order to cure constipation or because of intake of poisonous heavy metal or food. The problem starts with stomach upset and cramps. The child shows disinterest in eating and feels weak. Symptoms of stomach flu are diarrhea and vomiting, which take nearly five days to go away. Sometimes, even fever can accompany along with dehydration.

The child must be given fluids regularly as this will suppress other symptoms from emerging because of loss of water from the body. Loss of water and salt from the body is the biggest risk in stomach flu. Dehydration can not only worsen the condition, but can threaten the life of the child, if it isn't taken care of in the early stages. Since there is loss of salts along with the loss of water from the body, plain water won't do much. Oral rehydration solutions which are available at the local grocery or drug store, is a good idea because it has the correct combination of salts, sugar and water which can hydrate the body. These fluids come in different flavor, so

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that kids can have their favorite flavor and is easy to consume. The solution shouldn't be added with anything else such as sugar or water.

If a child is vomiting, solution can be administered to him using a teaspoon every two minutes. The quantity can be increased gradually. If the vomiting is more frequent, the child can be made to suck ice chips in order to supply constant fluid to the body. The solution should be given till diarrhea comes to a halt, but it is not advisable to continue it for more than twenty four hours. Some of the fluids such as soft drinks, sports drink, apple juice, tea, or chicken broth contain wrong amounts of salt, sugar & water and can make matter worse. Besides fluids, the parent shouldn't give any type of medicine without consulting a pediatrician. Fried, spicy and sugary foods aren't good in this condition. If the child isn't receiving sufficient amount of fluids he/she will show signs such as sunken eyes, dry mouth, intense thirst, unusual sleep patterns, and decrease in urine.

The more the bed rest taken by the child the better it is. The child should take complete bed rest for at least twenty four hours or till the diarrhea and vomiting stops. If the child has fever, the temperature should be checked and noted in a log, every four hours. If the temperature is very high and doesn't stop climbing, the doctor should be contacted immediately. The person who is preparing and serving food to the child should wash his or her hands very carefully before doing so. Also, if the diarrhea and vomiting doesn't stop after twenty four hours, it is a must to get a doctor's appointment. The child should be rushed into emergency if the vomiting contains blood or green color substance.

The doctor, after doing stool and blood test, prescribes antibiotics if infection is suspected. Along with it, anti nausea medicines are also given to stop the throwing up and control fluid loss. If there is considerable loss of fluids from the child's body, the child might be admitted into the hospital and will be administered with fluids such as glucose or IV, through a tube connected to the child's veins. If the child has fever, temperature is checked and the doctor would ask about information about the temperature pattern, for which the parent should be ready. If the illness is stretched for days, a log about the information about the daily weight should also be given to the doctor. Sometimes, the blood oxygen levels would also have to be checked with the help of a pulse oximeter.

## Swimmer's Ear in Children

Swimmer's ear is bacterial growth infection inside the canal of the ear. It is also known as Otitis Externa. It differs a lot from ear infections which are dealt with on a regular

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basis, which is contracted at times when the child catches a cold. The common ear infection is known as Otitis Media, in which the middle of the ear is infected. In case of swimmer's ear, the ear canal which leads towards the ear drum is infected by bacteria. The first symptom is that when the finger is stuck inside the ear canal, it will hurt a lot. In normal cases, it won't hurt at all.

The skin within that are is very delicate and hence, is protected by nature by a thin earwax coating. Usually, water can easily glide inside and then outside the ear without any problem. But when the water cleans some or all of the earwax and if some of the water is retained inside, the bacteria will take advantage of this situation. Chemicals in the water aggravate the situation by increasing the irritation. It starts growing within the soft and warm ear canal and can cause swelling and redness. A slight itchiness also accompanies it. But the child must be instructed to not to scratch, otherwise there is a greater chance of the situation becoming worse. If there is no itchiness, obviously there will be pain, which is the initial symptom. The ear should not be bumped or touched even from the exterior, as that will cause intense pain. Hearing can become difficult due to the bacterial infection as that will swell the ear canal and block the passage.

The pain and itchiness can only be gotten rid off by fighting the infection and killing the grown bacteria. In usual cases, ear drops are prescribed by the doctor. These ear drops have antibiotics which are meant to kill the bacteria. The dosage and number of days to use the ear drops as told by the doctor should be strictly followed. If the doses are missed there is a possibility of bacterial re-growth. A wick is also introduced inside the ear, sometimes. This wick actually is small piece of sponge with absorbed lotion. The wick is left inside then. This procedure is used when the doctor thinks it is important to apply medicine directly to the part of the ear canal which is infected. If the pain is unbearable by the child, parents can give pain killers, but only after taking suggestion from the doctor. Once the antibiotics begin working, pain killers can be stopped.

Swimmer's ear cannot be just attained cause of water entering the ear at the time of taking baths or showers. Children, who have joined the summer swimming camp, can complain of this problem. After the swimmer's ear is treated, the child shouldn't swim immediately. Doctor, usually, advises them to stay away from water for a week or two. The time period may sound very long, but it keeps the pain away for a long time. Special ear drops are available over the counter which can be put inside the child's ear after swimming is over. This will dry up any water inside the ear, if any. Swimmer's ear can also be caused when inquisitive kids try to stuff things inside the ear and thus damaging it. Bacteria get a chance of developing on the scratched area. In this case, only parent's supervision will do the trick.

## Tonsils and Tonsillitis in Children

Tonsils are two tissue balls located at the back of the throat. They play a vital role and are an important part of the body's infection fighting mechanism by helping to fight germs and diseases. Tonsils deal with the germs before they reach mouth, throat, or sinuses. When these infection fighters are infected by viruses or bacteria, the condition is known as tonsillitis.

The symptoms of tonsillitis are: as the time passes, eating, drinking and swallowing things become difficult. The pain can be accompanied with fever, earache and headache. The tonsils can be seen too. Just open the mouth wide open and the two masses of tissues at the either side of the throat are tonsils. They are usually dark pink in color, but when they get infected they turn red. A white or yellow coating can also be formed on the tonsils. There is an obvious change in voice as it becomes hoarser. The infected child can also develop bad breath. The infected kid can also get abdominal pain and can throw up what he eats. Tonsillitis is caused by both bacterial infection and viral infection. Bacterium known as streptococci causes infections which require special treatment.

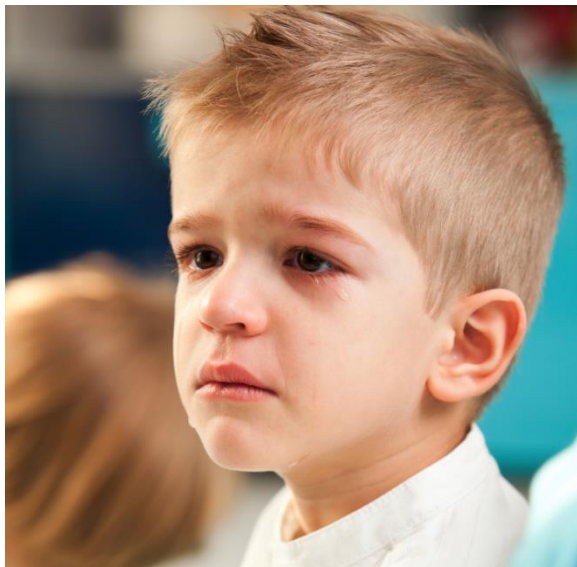
When the child gets tonsillitis, the parent should give lots of fluids to drink. Smooth food should be consumed to ease the pain caused by swallowing coarse, crunchy, and hard food. Food like soups, ice creams, applesauce, and gelatin are a good option. Spicy food should also be avoided. A humidifier or cool mist vaporizer can be placed in the child's room as that will make breathing more easily. The kid must be given maximum rest and complete bed rest for at least two days is recommended. The bacteria and viruses cause tonsillitis to spread by sneezing, coughing or touching. The infected child must cover his/her mouth while coughing and sneezing. A disposable tissue can be used instead of a towel or handkerchief. Things such as utensils, towel, clothing, etc. of the sick kid should be separated so that the rest of the family doesn't get affected.

The doctor inspects the tonsils using a wooden stick known as tongue depressor, which will lower the tongue, so that the doctor can have a good look at the tonsils. After that the doctor checks the ears and nose. Heartbeat will be checked. If the doctor suspects strep, he/she will take a sample of saliva from the back of the throat using a long cotton swab, which can gag up the child a bit. After a day or two the results are received. Some doctors conduct a similar test known as rapid strep test, which give results within few minutes. Antibiotics are given when the test results come positive for strep. The bacteria get killed only when the course is completed and the correct dosage is taken at correct time.

If virus is the cause of infection, there is no medicine for it and instead the body is capable of fighting the virus on its own. When the tonsils infection becomes frequent and the child finds it difficult to breathe because of tonsillitis, it is recommended to get the tonsils removed. But it is the last resort after all other treatments do not do the trick, because tonsils are very important to the body's immune system.

The tonsils are taken out by surgery known as tonsillectomy. After the surgery, the child won't suffer from sore throat and breathing problems anymore. The surgery won't even leave any scars. A day before the surgery, the child cannot eat or drink, to keep the child from throwing up during the operation. The operation is very short and last for only twenty minutes. Because of the anesthesia, the child won't feel a thing during the operation. And during the surgery, the tonsils are removed using an electric cautery, which is a burning tool, or a cutting tool. After the surgery, the child is given lots of fluids and after a day soft foods can also be given. Usually it takes about two weeks to completely recover from the surgery and the child can return back to normal activities.

## Urinary Tract Infection in Children



Urinary tract infection makes urinating painful. The infected children think twice before going to the bathroom and they always get a feeling to go to the bathroom. The urine also smells bad because of the infection. Bacteria are responsible for infecting the urinary track.

The urinary track consists of certain parts such as two kidneys, bladder, two ureters and a urethra. The kidney does the major job of cleaning waste from the blood. The waste material is urine which is passed to the bladder through the ureters. The shape

of the bladder is very similar to a deflated balloon. When the bladder gets filled two hundred and thirty seven milliliters of urine, the brain sends signals to go to the bathroom. When the person gets ready to pass, the muscles located at the end of the bladder relax which lets the urine rush through the urethra, from the bladder, and out of the body.

When children face any of the symptoms of urinary tract infection, they should talk about it to their parents as the symptoms are visible to the parent more than to others. Parents can observe the urinating frequency of the children. The child feels terrible pain while peeing. He/she is able to pass only small quantity at a time. He/she also gets up several times during the night to go to the bathroom. There is a strange sensation in the lower part of the belly. Blood can also pass along with the urine. Also the urine isn't a clear solution and is cloudy. The urine smells badly after passing. These are all the symptoms of bladder infection. The child can also feel feverish along with chills. Pain can be experienced in the back or the belly. When the pain is right below the ribs, it is a clear sign of kidney infection. Depending on the severity of the symptoms, the child should be taken to the doctor.

The doctor will take urine sample for testing. The urine is taken in a plastic cup, into which the child pees. Before passing, the child must wipe the area with special wipes, so that the germs from the body do not confuse with the germs in the urine. Germs in the urine are an indication of infection. Although there are million of germs residing on the exterior of the body, they are completely harmless. Only a few of them actually infect the body. A stick is dipped in the urine sample. The stick is special, that is it is a specially treated paper which changes color upon determination of an infection. Otherwise, the urine sample can also be sent to the laboratory. In case of a bladder infection, the doctor will prescribe medicine that kills the bacteria.

The child will begin to feel good just few days after starting to consume the medicine. But he/she must stay away from food and liquid which has caffeine in it as it can elevate the bladder irritation and the patient will feel very uncomfortable. After the test, if kidney infection is detected, the child will be hospitalized for few days. He/she will be given a germ fighting medicine which will be administered by a small plastic tube which will be introduced in a vein.

After the child recovers from a urinary tract infection, he/she should try best to avoid such incidents in the future. The most important thing is to maintain cleanliness. The private parts should be washed everyday. It is best to take a shower or a bath daily. The child can use wipes to clean every time after passing urine. Children should never hold the urine. When they feel the urge, they should rush to the bathroom immediately. Fluids intake must be increased. Best fluids are water and cranberry juice. Water washes the bacteria out of the body and cranberry juice prevents another bacterial attack. Bubble baths aren't good as it can irritate the urethra. Cotton underwear will absorb the sweat and body moisture, which will prevent bacterial growth. Underpants must be changed everyday.

## Warts in Kids

Nearly fifty percent of children acquire warts at some time or the other. Warts, in the real sense are benign tumors which develop when keratinocytes, a kind of skin cell, is infected by the wart virus. There are many types of warts, the most common being rough bumps which appear on fingers and hands. Others are flat warts, genital warts, plantar warts, and molluscum contagiosum. The difference is based on the types, location, and painfulness of the wart. Common warts appear on fingers and hands and usually are painless. Plantar warts appear on the soles and are sometimes painful. Periungal warts show up around the finger and toe nail. Warts which appear on the face are flat warts.

The symptoms of the common warts are that the skin develops an irregular surface and becomes rough. A dome starts to appear after a day after infection. A popular myth is that warts have roots, but they don't. They grow on the epidermis, which is the top most layer of the skin. The black portion is because of broken veins and clotted blood.

Warts come and go at various stages of life like childhood and teenage years. They usually go away by themselves. But some can be very painful, can spread quickly and some of them won't go away for many years. Such kind of warts should definitely be treated. The most common treatment among the pediatricians is cryotherapy. They will freeze the warts using liquid nitrogen. Cantharidin can also be applied, which is a painless treatment but can result in painful blisters at the end of the day. The minus point is that these treatments sometimes cause blistering and some warts won't come off in one sitting. If the warts won't still budge they are further treated with strong salicylic acid, intralesional immune-therapy, bleomycin, or a pulsed dye laser. Aldara can also be used in worst cases. Because of some treatments the warts grow to the end of the blister, which results in a bigger wart and some might even result in a scar.

Besides other common wart treatments, the most well-known home remedy is duct tape. The affected area is covered with duct tape for about six days. If within that time period, the tape peels off, it should be reapplied. After the sixth day, the duct tape should be removed and the wart should be soaked in water and a pumice stone or emery board should be used to scrap the top skin of the wart. After this, the duct tape should be reapplied again within twenty four hours and the same procedure should be repeated until the whole wart disappears. This procedure takes at least two months to get rid of the wart completely. Some kids hesitate to put duct tape on parts which are visible, like fingers and legs. They can be encouraged by making them wear colored duct tape, other than grey. Many home wart freezing and removal kits are also available in the market whose help can be taken.

Warts spread by direct contact with the wart or any material which the infected person has used like a used towel which has been contaminated. It is contagious and hence it is recommended to stay away from it at the very sight of it. All the cuts, rashes and bites should be cleaned regularly and should be kept covered. Another measure for prevention is wearing closed shoes in public places.