

When to bring your child to the Emergency Room

When it is an emergency, go straight to the nearest Emergency Room or call 9-1-1.

When it is not an emergency, it is best to treat your child's illness at home, a doctor's office, a walk-in clinic, or an urgent and primary care centre.

Not sure if it's an emergency?

Call Fraser Health Virtual Care at 1-800-314-0999

Emergency	Not an emergency
<p>○ Breathing problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working hard to breathe or breathing faster than normal (respiratory distress) • pale skin, whitish or blue lips • asthma or wheezing and not responding to prescribed medications 	<p>○ Breathing problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a stuffy nose (nasal congestion) and cough, even if this interrupts sleep • signs of a 'common cold' • mild signs of asthma or wheezing that responds to usual puffers and other medicines
<p>○ Fever</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the baby is less than 3 months old • immune system problems or complex chronic health problems • very sleepy or difficult to wake • for more than 5 days in a child any age 	<p>○ Fever</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy and vaccinated baby • lasts less than 5 days and looks and acts well in spite of the fever
<p>○ Vomiting or diarrhea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if the baby is less than 3 months old • immune system problems or complex chronic health problems • very sleepy or difficult to wake • lasts for more than 5 days, in a child any age 	<p>○ Vomiting or diarrhea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vomiting or diarrhea less than 3 to 4 times a day • loose bowel movements after 'stomach flu' (this can last up to 2 weeks)
<p>○ Injuries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • head injury and passes out (loss of consciousness), is confused, or throws up • head injury with visible bump behind the ears, sides of the head, or back of the head • head injury with visible bump and child is less than 3 months old • fall more than 4 feet or 1.2 metres, or down more than 5 stairs • cuts with gaping edges or continues to bleed even after putting pressure on the cut • burns that blister and are larger than a Loonie • injury to an arm or leg that looks crooked and child not able to use the limb, or injury causes swelling that does not go down with ice and rest over 48 hours • eye injuries • injury causing chest or stomach pain 	<p>○ Injuries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bump to the head, and no passing out, no confusion, no throwing up • head injury with normal behavior within 4 hours of injury even with a bump to the forehead (even a large one) • scrapes and bruises but the child still has full use of the injured limb • sun burns
<p>○ Rashes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever with a rash that looks like either blisters or bruises that don't turn white or fade when you push on them 	<p>○ Rashes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rash or skin problem that keeps coming back • rash with cough and signs of a cold as long as child looks well • mild hives relieved by antihistamine (Reactine®) and no trouble breathing or swelling of the throat or tongue

In the Emergency Department

We are committed to making sure that every child gets the care they need and the most urgent patients are seen first.

We see people based on how sick they are not by when or how they came to the hospital. This is not the same as a “line-up” for service. We always see and treat the sickest people first. We thank those coming for medical care for their patience and for treating us with respect.

Colds, the flu, and other viruses

Viruses, including colds, flu, and COVID-19, are very common in the fall, winter, and spring. Most young children in daycare or school will get sick with a virus more than once during these seasons. It can be frustrating to see your child sick every few weeks, and it might seem like their cough and runny nose never goes away. In fact, a cough can last for 2 to 3 weeks after getting infected with a virus.

Many infections from viruses also cause fever. Fever is a sign the body's immune system is working to fight the infection. Children often get higher fevers than adults who have the same infection. It is not unusual for a child with a virus like the flu to have a temperature of 39° to 40° C (102.2° to 104 F°). The fever itself is not dangerous but can make the child fussy or sleepy.

No fever-reducing medicine

If you are trying to treat a fever without fever-reducing medicine, here are other ways to treat the fever:

- Have your child drink plenty of fluids.
- Dress them in light clothing.
- Sponge them with cool or barely warm water.

Help stop the spread

Here are things we can all do to help stop the spread of all respiratory illness this season:

- Get all recommended vaccines including influenza and COVID-19 booster vaccine doses.
- Choose to wear a mask when in indoor public spaces.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve.
- Clean your hands often. Try not to touch your face, especially your eyes, mouth, and nose.
- When you don't feel well, stay home and try not to spend time with people who are at higher risk of serious illness.

Mental health crisis

If your school counsellor or family doctor has concerns, ask them to speak directly with Mental Health Services. This could avoid the need to go to the Emergency Room.

To get urgent help if your child is thinking about ending their life:

- Call 9-1-1
or 1-800-SUICIDE
- Contact our Short Term, Assessment, Response, Treatment (START) team at 1-844-782-7811.

Other resources

- fraserhealth.ca/UrgentCare
- **Fraser Health Virtual Care**
1-800-314-0999
Live chat - fraserhealth.ca/virtualcare
10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., daily
- **HealthLinkBC.ca**
8-1-1 (7-1-1 TTY)
- **ChildHealthBC.ca**
- **Translating Emergency Knowledge for Kids**
(trekk.ca)
- **AboutKidsHealth.ca**

Please note: The Emergency Rooms do not have samples or medicines to take-home, such as Tylenol and Advil.