

Dear parent/carer(s),

Important health information from Dr Rachel Joyce

With A&E departments in our area currently seeing high numbers of children, I'm writing to all parents and carers to share advice about getting the right care for your child in the right place, as quickly as possible.

Having a poorly child can be frightening, and it is sometimes hard to know what to do for the best. If you are concerned about your child's health, contact 111 online, www.111.nhs.uk (for children aged 5 and over) or alternatively call 111 or speak to your GP or a local pharmacist. They are trained to recognise the symptoms of serious illness and will direct you to an A&E if that's the best option for your child.

You will also find comprehensive and clear information on the [Hertfordshire and West Essex Healthier Together website - www.hwehealthiertogether.nhs.uk](http://www.hwehealthiertogether.nhs.uk). It has information about a range of common childhood illnesses and their symptoms, all in one place and supplied by trusted local health experts.

There are easy-to-follow 'traffic light' descriptions for different illnesses help parents and carers to understand how serious their child's symptoms are, and give advice on what to do if symptoms get worse. There is advice on when and how you can treat your child safely at home, and when you need to get urgent help.

The website includes advice on the following illnesses:

- [fever/high temperature](#)
- [coughs and colds](#)
- [difficulty breathing and wheezing](#)
- Infectious diseases such as [measles](#) and [scarlet fever](#)
- [tummy ache](#)
- [diarrhoea and vomiting.](#)

The website also includes advice on:

- [managing asthma](#)
- [childhood vaccinations](#)
- [mental health and wellbeing support](#)
- [worried over the cost of daily living.](#)

Each page has a language translation function for people who need it. There's also a range of information on important topics and places you can get extra support.

The NHS is here for you. If you are seriously concerned about your child's health, don't hesitate to get help. Always dial 999 if you have a life or limb-threatening emergency.

I hope that you have found this information helpful in looking after your child safely this winter.

Dr Rachel Joyce,
Medical Director for NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex [Integrated Care Board](#)

Dr Jane Halpin, Chief Executive

Rt. Hon. Paul Burstow, Chair