



Pediatric Clinic
PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

The Sick Infant: Judging the Severity of Illness

During the first 2 years of a child's life, most parents feel uncomfortable and inadequate in determining how sick their child is during a cold or other infection. Since the child can't talk, he or she can't help much with the diagnosis. How sick your child looks or acts is much more relevant than the level of fever. Also, a child may look much better 30 to 40 minutes after the fever is reduced with medicine.

CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF:

(1-888-887-4111 after hours)

(526-7653 during duty hours)

- Your child is a newborn (less than 1 month old) with any sign of illness. (Exception: You don't need to call your physician if your newborn has just mild nasal congestion.)
- Your child looks or acts very sick.
- Your child cannot be made to smile or hardly responds.
- Your child refuses to play.
- Your child is too weak to sit up or stand.
- Your child cries constantly for more than 3 hours.
- Your child cries when you touch him or hold him.
- The cry becomes high-pitched and strange sounding.
- The cry becomes a weak whimper or moan.
- Your child cannot sleep for more than 30 minutes at a time.
- Your child cannot be comforted for more than 30 minutes at a time.
- Your child cannot be fully awakened.
- Your child's breathing becomes labored.
- Your child's mouth and lips turn bluish.
- Your child's skin becomes grayish.