

“Snotty Kids”

Dear Parents,

You may have seen in the news that we are seeing an abnormally high number of children with viral infections this winter. We wanted to write to you to give you a bit more information about this.

Why is it happening?

In normal pre-covid times children would encounter many different infections during their first couple of years and would generally have a run of snotty noses and temperatures for the first winter or two. Because of the social distancing measures put in place to control covid this has not happened and so the children who would normally have had these infections have a bit of catching up to do.

Now that we are mixing more freely, the normal winter viruses (that give us all colds and make children cough, have runny noses, and have temperatures) are circulating and many children are catching repeated infections one after the other. Most of these infections are not serious but they can be very worrying especially when you haven't had the opportunity to get used to them.

What about COVID?

Many of these infections will not be COVID but they are impossible to distinguish from COVID by symptoms alone. The current symptom profile of COVID infections includes runny nose and sneezing as well as itchy/sore eyes. The only specific symptom of COVID that is less common in colds is the loss of taste and smell. Obviously, toddlers are very unlikely to tell you if that has happened.

As you know most children don't get very unwell (or unwell at all) with COVID. Although it is rare for children to need to be seen in hospital for COVID there are a number who are quite miserable and can have significant symptoms (high temperature, vomiting).

What should you do?

If your child has any symptoms of a cold, you should organise a PCR test for COVID to ensure they are isolating if necessary.

Most of these illnesses are minor and get better within a few days. There is no treatment for a virus, so we must allow the child's immune system to fight it off. This is the process by which their immune system develops and which they have so far missed out on.

It can be very worrying when your child is unwell (especially if they have a high temperature) and this is truer when they have been generally well for most of their life so far. We are always happy to see children who are unwell, but this is often not necessary. Below is a link to an information leaflet called 'when to worry' which has clear advice about what is reasonable to manage at home and what needs further medical attention.

http://www.whenshouldiworry.com/resources/When%20should%20I%20worry-Booklet_Scotland.pdf

If you have any concern about your child, please call the surgery and book them an appointment.