

Some emergency symptoms may be difficult to recognize. If your child has any of the following symptoms, please contact our office immediately. Phone 972-608-0774

**Sick Newborn** If your baby is less than 2 months old and has a rectal temperature of 101.2 or higher, your baby must be seen by a doctor as soon as possible. If your baby is not feeding well, please call the office as soon as possible.

**Severe Lethargy** It will be normal for a child to be more tired and less active during an illness. A lethargic child is defined as one who stares into space without recognizing you as a parent, lies in your arms very floppy, or is difficult to awaken. These symptoms are very serious, and your child will need to be seen immediately.

**Stiff Neck** To test for a stiff neck in a child over 2 years old, lay your child down on his back. Then, lift the head until the chin touches the middle of the chest. If your child cries and keeps her neck stiff, this may be a sign of meningitis. An older child with meningitis will usually complain of headache, and have accompanying fever. For infants who cannot verbalize pain, they will generally be crying excessively and inconsolable.

**Can't Walk** If your child has learned to walk and then loses the ability to stand or walk, he may have a serious injury to the legs or an acute problem with balance. If your child bends over holding his stomach, he probably has a serious abdominal problem. If your child has a fever and refuses to bear weight, call our office immediately.

**Tender Abdomen** Press on your child's belly while he is sitting in your lap and looking at a book. Normally, when your child is relaxed, you should be able to press an inch or so in with your fingers in all parts of the belly without resistance. It is significant if your child pushes your hand away or screams. If the belly is bloated and hard, you will need to be seen immediately by a physician.

**Tender Testicle/Scrotum** The sudden onset of pain in the groin can be from twisting of the testicle. You will usually see a very red area on the scrotum that is exquisitely painful to touch. This condition will require surgery within 8 hours to save the testicle.

**Labored Breathing** The best time to evaluate your child's breathing is after you have cleaned out the nose with a small amount of nasal saline solution, and when he is not coughing. We are concerned when your infant is breathing rapidly at a rate of more than 60 breaths/ minute, or more than 40 breaths / minute for an older child, retracting (tugging in between the ribs), or appears to be gasping for air with each breath (watch to see if the belly sinks inward with each inspiratory breath). It is more worrisome if your child appears to have bluish color when you look in his mouth and lips.

**Bluish Lips** When your infant's lips appear to have a bluish color, you will need to open his mouth and evaluate the color of his gums, tongue, and sides of the mouth. If the gums, tongue and sides of the mouth are pink, it is not worrisome. If those areas are bluish, it indicates a reduced amount of oxygen in the bloodstream. The next important step is to check if he is breathing. You will want to

undress him quickly and look to see if his chest is moving up and down. If you do not see any movement, call 911 immediately and initiate CPR.

**Dehydration** Dehydration means that your child's body fluids are low. Your child may become dehydrated following severe vomiting and diarrhea. Signs and symptoms of dehydration are as follows: (1) no urine output in 8 hours for infants less than 12 months of age, or 10-12 hours for children more than 12 months, (2) crying that does not produce tears, (3) a mouth that is dry rather than moist, (4) a soft spot that is sunken. If you recognize any signs of dehydration, your child will need fluid replacement by mouth or intravenously.

**Bulging Soft Spot** If the soft spot is tense and bulging, the brain is under pressure. Because it is normal for the soft spot to bulge when your infant is crying, you will need to assess your infant when she is quiet and in an upright position. It is best to be aware of what your child's soft spot usually looks like so that you can tell if this is a change.

**Injured Neck** Discuss any injury to the neck, regardless of symptoms, with your child's physician because of the risk of damage to the spinal cord.

**Purple Spots** Aside from explained bruises, purple or blood-red spots on the skin can be a sign of a serious infection in the bloodstream. If the spots are noted on the arms or legs, and accompanied by fever, your child should be seen by a physician immediately.