

Nutribén®

Autumn care and illness prevention



Autumn is a time of year in which climatic changes, new habits and the surroundings in which young children find themselves (nursery, school, etc.), make it easier to increase the risk of suffering and contagion of certain diseases. We refer, to a greater extent, to those produced by viruses that affect the respiratory system, without forgetting other pathologies caused by bacteria or fungus that interfere with the proper functioning of other body systems.

Due to the lower maturation of the immune system in children, it is important to keep in mind a series of simple prevention tips that can make life easier for the little ones and their caregivers.



Some of the most frequent illnesses that can appear in the autumn season are:



Common cold with the symptoms in the upper respiratory system: nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, cough, and sometimes fever.

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Pharyngitis.

In children under the age of 3, it is usually of viral origin. Children may have some discomfort in the pharynx, cough and sometimes fever, associated with the onset of diarrhea in some cases.



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Sinusitis.

As a complication of an upper respiratory tract due to a cold, children under 2 years of age might have an inflammation of the mucous membrane of the paranasal sinuses that may last for more than 10 days, with the appearance of mucopurulent mucus, pain in the sinus area or periorbital edema. It can be caused by bacteria such as *S. pneumoniae* or *H. influenzae*.



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Laryngitis.

The most common symptoms are hoarse cough, voice loss, respiratory distress, and inspiratory stridor, with upper respiratory system obstruction due to nasal mucosa effect. Especially, these symptoms appear with parainfluenza virus and to a lesser extent, respiratory syncytial virus, adenovirus, etc



Bronchiolitis.

The viral disease usually caused by the respiratory syncytial virus in infants, which presents as a cold in the upper respiratory tract. It evolves in the first 24 - 72 hours with the appearance of respiratory distress, dry cough, fever, vomiting or food rejection, and irritability.

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Pneumonia.

Infection of the lung tissue that often appears as a complication of another respiratory tract infection. In children under 4 years of age, the most frequently involved microorganism is the respiratory syncytial virus, followed by pneumococcus. In the usual forms, it occurs abruptly with high fever, cough, general discomfort and hypoxia.

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Conjunctivitis.

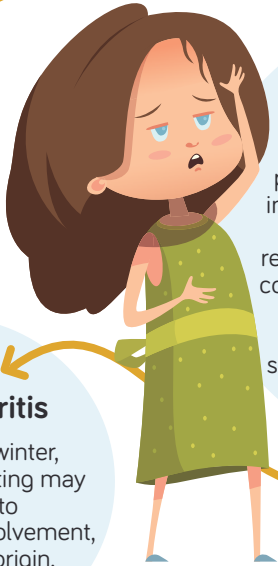
Inflammation of the conjunctiva of the eye often appears as a complication of the flu or viral pharyngitis. It is characterized by redness of the eye, clear discharge, tearing, and swollen lymph nodes behind the ears. Bacterial conjunctivitis, with purulent discharge and a rheum, may also occur.



Otitis.

They are usually favored by the suffering of colds in the upper tract and the accumulation of mucus, giving rise to pain in the ear, fever, general discomfort and otorrhea (presence of secretion in the ear).

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Allergy and asthmatic symptoms. The increase in humidity and the drop-in temperature with the proliferation of fungus and the increase in dust mites can favor the appearance of allergic respiratory symptoms with nasal congestion, sneezing, runny nose, itching of the eyes, irritating cough and the sensation of shortness of breath or dyspnea.

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Gastroenteritis

In autumn and winter, diarrhea and vomiting may appear due to gastrointestinal involvement, usually of viral origin.

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Exanthematal diseases, pathologies such as the sudden Exanthema, with the appearance of a high fever and subsequent skin rash, produced by the herpes virus type 6, or the hand-foot-and-mouth disease, produced by the Coxsacki virus, with the development of small blisters and sores in the mouth, hands and feet, although they may also appear in other parts of the body.

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Atopic dermatitis

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A skin disease that leads to outbreaks, more frequent in spring and autumn due to sudden changes in temperature, in which there is a reaction of inflammation and hypersensitivity in the skin that leads to the usual appearance of itching, eczema, and redness, especially in the areas of flexures of the body. In infants and up to the age of two, eczema predominates in the cheeks, progressing to the rest of the face and leaving the nasolabial triangle-free.

What are the general safety steps to be taken?

The transmission of these contagious diseases occurs in 80% of cases by direct contact with the fomites (small droplets of saliva that are expelled with sneezes or coughs, mucus, etc.), usually by manual contact.



To prevent it, it is important to use water always with soap, rubbing well the whole surface of the hand: palm, back, fingers, without forgetting the space under the nails. In situations where soap and water are not accessible, antiseptic hand solutions can be used.

For the same reason, it is necessary to make sure that the babies do not share utensils that can be put in their mouths such as cutlery, pacifiers, toys, teethingers, etc. It is also essential to use disposable single-use tissues, with which to cover the mouth every time you sneeze or cough and to blow your nose.

Vaccination against contagious diseases has been established as the most effective form of prevention of these diseases. It is therefore essential to keep the children's vaccination schedule up to date as established by health authorities and scientific societies. Parents and carers have to in addprovide them with access to this scientifically proven protection and to make it available in public health systems.

Taking into account some of the information about diseases we have mentioned above, the pneumococcal vaccination, or one against Haemophilus influenzae, the vaccination against whooping cough (included in the joint vaccination of tetanus and diphtheria), or the vaccination against rotavirus, are measures that help to prevent these diseases that may also appear in the autumn.

Both children and older people who are in contact with contagious diseases have to wash their hands when eating or handling food, if they cough or sneeze with hand to mouth contact, when blowing their nose or cleaning secretions, if they handle toys, pacifiers, etc. and whenever they go to the bathroom or help a child there, as well as when changing the baby's diaper.

Autumn is also the time when the flu vaccination campaign is carried out, which in the case of children is recommended for those older than 6 months who suffer from a disease such as diabetes, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, etc., which can be aggravated by suffering from the flu. Also, family members and caregivers who are in contact with infants under 6 months of age suffering from these diseases should be vaccinated. It is also advisable to vaccinate healthy children older than 6 months who live with people with illnesses that can develop complications when suffering from the flu.



Another important factor to consider when a child suffers from any of these infectious diseases is to rest at home and not go to daycare centers or schools, as this can be a source of contagion for other children. Similarly, all adults with any infectious pathology should avoid direct contact with children.

Proper nutrition and hydration of the child are essential for the prevention of diseases. Regarding it, breastfeeding and prolonging it as much as possible is one of the best things we can do. Besides, once the complementary feeding is established according to the recommendations of the pediatricians, they should be offered a varied diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

Another precautionary measure is to prevent children from being exposed to the effects of tobacco smoke, as this can lead to respiratory infections. It is also important to frequently ventilate the spaces to renew the air breathed by children. In addition, the adaptation of clothing according to the weather, thus avoiding sudden changes in temperature. This circumstance should be considered to prevent the colonisation of the respiratory tract by viruses and bacteria, as well as avoiding the appearance of outbreaks of atopic dermatitis, etc.

Hygiene in general, for both children and their caregivers, as well as the home or nursery schools, is essential for the prevention of the most prevalent diseases in the autumn season.

Bibliography

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