

# Specialist Paediatric Outreach Respiratory Team (SPORT)



## Signs and symptoms that your child is working harder with their breathing

**Noisy breathing** - Listen for breathing that sounds like grunting, wheezing or like mucus is in the throat.

**Nasal flaring** - Check to see if nostrils widen when breathing in.

**Mood change** – Check to see if your child is sleepier, difficult to wake, fussier than usual, or "just not acting like themselves."

### Accessory muscle use

– In older children (or children with head control), shoulders may elevate on the in breath due to increased work from neck muscles.

**Head bobbing** – In a younger child (or child without head control) they might bob their head forwards when doing an in breath

**Change in body position** – Your child may change their posture to try to breathe easier, like leaning forward or tilting his head up or backwards.

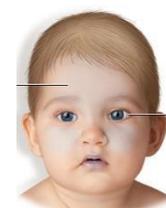
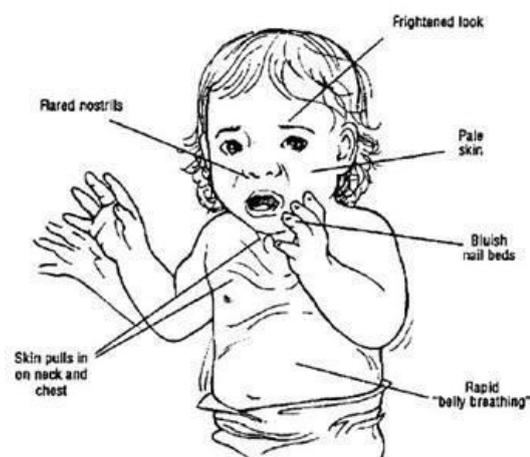
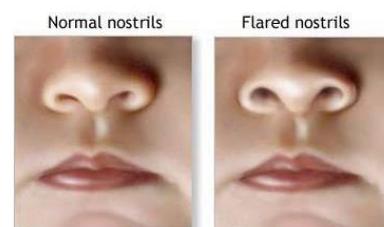
**Recession/retractions**- Check to see if the chest pulls in with each breath, especially around;

- Where your two collarbones meet (tracheal tug)
- Inbetween the ribs
- If tummy pulls in beneath rib cage

**Pale or bluish skin color** - Check around the lips, eyes, hands and feet, especially the nail beds

**Clammy skin** – Feel your child's skin to see if it is cool but also sweaty. The head may be sweaty while the skin feels cool or clammy.

If you need any further information, please contact: **01282 803587**



## Normal Breathing Rate

Age	Breaths per Minute
0-3 months	35-55
3-6 months	30-45
6-12 months	25-40
1-3 years	20-30
3-6 years	20-25
6-12 years	14-22

**Increased breathing rate** - Count the number of breaths for one minute. Is your child breathing faster than usual?

### **Are there other signs of struggling to breathe?**

Is your child able to talk in a full sentence? (if appropriate)

Are they gasping for breath?

## Why is my child breathing like this?

There are many reasons your child could be breathing faster, have an altered breathing pattern or are working harder to breathe.

It could be because they are acutely unwell with a virus or many other reasons. You don't need to know why at this point, but acting appropriately and fast is crucial.

## What should I do?

If your child is showing one or more of these signs or symptoms and it is **new** or a **change** for them, the most important thing to do is act quickly.

1. Stay calm and reassure your child. Stay with them and monitor them closely.
2. Place your child in a comfortable position, usually sitting up or lying on one side raised up with pillows if able.
3. Options to try;
  - Change their position into a position to ease breathlessness (see separate sheet)
  - Give their reliever (blue) inhaler with spacer if appropriate as per personal action plan.
  - If they already have a chest physiotherapy programme –complete this.

**However:** If after a couple of minutes your child continues to show one or more signs or symptoms continuously then  Contact emergency services immediately.

**Please Note:** This leaflet does not cover if your child stops breathing or becomes unresponsive. If this happens, you must **Telephone 999 immediately** and follow the emergency services advice over the phone.