

# Skeltons Chemists

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## Opening Times

Monday to Friday - 8.30am - 5.30pm

Saturday - 8.30am - 1pm

Sundays & Bank Holidays - Closed

## Your FREE Healthy Living Leaflet for July 2025

1. What is pertussis?
2. What causes it?
3. What are the symptoms?
4. How long does whooping cough last?
5. How many cases of whooping cough were reported in the UK in 2024?
6. What is RSV?
7. How common is it?
8. Can it be dangerous?
9. How is RSV spread?
10. What are the symptoms?



**Are you & your loved ones protected against whooping cough and RSV?**

**Answers on the bottom of P2**

### Whooping cough (pertussis)

This is an infection of your lungs and breathing tubes caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. It spreads very easily and can be serious. It is characterised by severe coughing fits, followed by a high pitched “whoop” sound during the subsequent intake of breath.

This disease although preventable by vaccination has been resurging in the UK in the last couple of years. There were 14,905 cases in the UK in 2024. The first signs of whooping cough are similar to a cold, then after a week you or your child

- Will get coughing bouts that last a few minutes and are worse at night.
- May make a “whoop” sound – a gasp for breath between breaths

- May have difficulty breathing after a bout and young infants may turn blue
- May bring up thick mucus, which can cause vomiting
- May become very red in the face (more common in adults)

Treatment for whooping cough depends on your age and how long you’ve had the infection. Hospital treatment is needed if you have severe whooping cough, or if your baby is under 6 months old and has whooping cough. If whooping cough is diagnosed within two weeks of your cough starting, you will be given antibiotics to help stop it spreading to others, but these may not reduce the symptoms. It is important to stay off school, work or nursery until 48 hours after starting antibiotics



or 2 weeks after your cough started if you've not had antibiotics.

The cough may last several weeks or months. A study of 5,222,860 people aged 50 and over between 2009 and 2018 found that there was an increase of direct medical costs of £318 with those diagnosed with pertussis compared to those who were not. This highlights the need for increased awareness of whooping cough infection in the older population.

## **Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)**

This is a common cause of coughs and colds. Almost all children under 2 get it at least once. People usually get better by themselves, but it can sometimes be serious for babies and older adults. Those who are at a higher risk of getting ill include:

- ◆ Babies under 6 months old
- ◆ Young children who were born prematurely
- ◆ Adults over 75
- ◆ Babies, children and adults with a weakened immune system, or long-term, lung or heart conditions
- ◆ People who smoke tobacco and babies exposed to tobacco smoke.

RSV is spread in the coughs and sneezes of someone who has the virus. The symptoms of an RSV infection usually start within a few days of getting infected. Most people only get cold like symptoms such as:

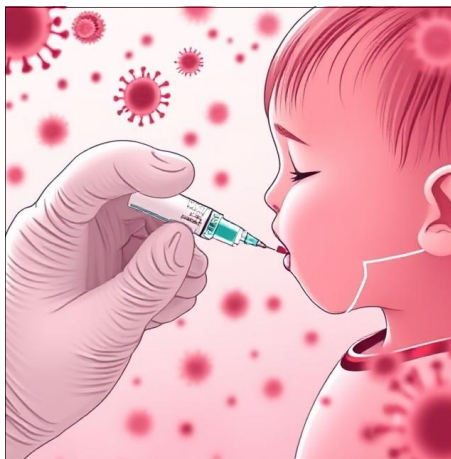
- ◇ A runny or blocked nose
- ◇ A cough
- ◇ Sneezing
- ◇ Tiredness
- ◇ A high temperature - signs include your back or chest feeling hotter than usual, sweatiness and shivering

Babies with RSV may also be irritable and feed less than usual. If RSV leads to a more serious infection (such as pneumonia or bronchiolitis) it may also cause:

- \* A cough that gets worse
- \* Shortness of breath

- \* Faster breathing or long gap between breaths
- \* Difficulty feeding (in babies) or loss of appetite
- \* Noisy breathing
- \* Confusion in older adults.

There is no specific treatment for the RSV infection. It often gets better on its own in 1-2 weeks and you can usually look after yourself or your child at home. Children and adults who get a more serious infection may need to be treated in hospital. This may include being



given fluids to avoid dehydration or oxygen to help you breathe. The NHS has been rolling out a new vaccination for RSV to protect older people 75-79 and newborn babies all year round. Older people will need just one dose for protection that will last multiple years while women should get the vaccine every time they get pregnant to protect each baby.

Recent analysis suggests that with an uptake of 60%, the maternal programme could result in 70,000 fewer RSV illnesses in infants, 20,000 fewer GP consultations and avoid more than 200 infants being admitted to intensive care. It also suggests that the first season of the older adult's catch-up programme could prevent around 2,500 hospital admissions, 15,000 GP visits and 60,000 illnesses in adults.

**Selected pharmacies around the country will be able to provide these vaccinations, so if you would like to know more about this or any other health condition, chat to one of our trained team.**

Answers: Q1, It is also called whooping cough and is an infection that mainly affects infants and children. Q2, It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Q3, Violent coughing, thick mucus, sore throat, may turn blue during coughing spells. Q4, Several weeks or months. Q5, 14.905. Q6, Respiratory syncytial virus and is a common cause of coughs and colds. Q7, Almost all children get them at least once before they're two years old. Q8, Yes for babies born prematurely, children under 2, people with chronic lung disease, congenital heart disease or weak immune system, adults over 75. Q9, In coughs and sneezes of someone who has the virus. Q10, Runny or blocked nose, a cough, sneezing, tiredness and a high temperature.