

When Should I Take My Child to the Emergency Room?

Constipation: Constipation is not an emergency. We do not recommend taking your child to the emergency room for constipation. If your baby is over one month of age you may give 1-2 oz of prune, apple or pear juice per day to help soften the stools. Otherwise, call the office during regular office hours for further advice or an appointment.

Cough and Cold: Cold symptoms are not an emergency. If your child is over the age of 6 years, you can give over the counter cough and cold medications. Otherwise, simple measures you can perform at home are to run a cool mist humidifier in your child's room and use saline spray or drops in the nose and bulb suction if they cannot blow their nose. If you still feel your child needs to be seen, call the office during regular hours for an appointment or further advice or take your child to ExpressCare at Southwell Medical Clinic or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit [mysouthwell.com/convenient care](http://mysouthwell.com/convenient-care) to view their hours of operation.

- **WHEN TO GO TO THE ER:** If your child is having labored breathing such as fast breathing, blue or pale color around the lips, audible wheezing, ribs or collar bones poking out, or nasal flaring. Or, if your child is having signs of dehydration such as less than 3-4 wet diapers in 24 hours, or few to no tears when crying.

Diarrhea: Diarrhea is not a reason to go to the emergency room. Do not give anti-diarrheal medications. We do not recommend them. The goal is to keep your child hydrated. Call the office during regular hours for an appointment or further advice or take your child to ExpressCare at Southwell Medical Clinic or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit [mysouthwell.com/convenient care](http://mysouthwell.com/convenient-care) to view their hours of operation.

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Vomiting: Vomiting is not a reason to go to the emergency room. Ways to help are sips of fluids, regularly. Call the office during regular hours for an appointment or further advice or take your child to ExpressCare at Southwell Medical Clinic or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit [mysouthwell.com/convenient care](http://mysouthwell.com/convenient-care) to view their hours of operation.

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Infant Spitting Up: This is not a medical emergency. This is something that should be addressed in the office and you should call the office during regular hours. The only exception is projectile spitting. This is forceful spitting that comes out in an arc, clears the baby and ends up several feet on the floor. This can usually wait until the office is open again. However, if there are signs of dehydration, less than 3-4 wet diapers in 24 hrs and /or the infant is projectile spitting every feeding and the office is closed take your child to the ER for further evaluation.

Head Injury: This can be an emergency!

- **WHEN TO GO TO THE ER:**
 - LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS**
 - VOMITING**
 - ACTING MORE DROWSY THAN USUAL**
 - APPEARING ESPECIALLY FUSSY OR CONFUSED**
 - HAVING DRAINAGE FROM NOSE, EARS, OR EYES**

If your child is having none of these symptoms after a head injury, it is okay to watch them at home and calling the office during regular hours for an appointment or further advice.

Rashes: Rashes are not an emergency within themselves. A rash is fine to be seen in the clinic during regular office hours or at Express Care.

- **WHEN TO GO TO THE ER:** If your child has rash, high fever and stiff neck.

Fever: Fever itself is not an emergency. Fever is considered a temperature greater than 100.4. Fever can be treated at home with the appropriate amount of fever reducer based on your child's weight (see chart below).

The height of the fever is not as important as how your child responds to fever reducing medication. If the child returns to their normal state after the appropriate amount of fever reducer, they should be fine and you can call the office during regular hours for an appointment or take your child to ExpressCare or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit [mysouthwell.com/convenient care](http://mysouthwell.com/convenient-care) to view their hours of operation.

The only exception to this is infants less than 2 months old.

- ❖ **FEVER IN AN INFANT LESS THAN 2 MONTHS:** Fever in an infant is still considered a rectal temperature greater than 100.4. Infants less than 2 months old with a fever need to be seen and assessed immediately. If this is during office hours, call for appointment. If this is after office hours or over the weekend, the infant should be taken to the emergency room for evaluation.

Swallowing foreign objects:

- If your child swallows magnets or batteries they should be taken to the emergency room immediately. If your swallows any other object and is having difficulty breathing, they should be taken to the emergency room.
- If your child swallows a substance or medication they were not prescribed, call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222.
- If your child swallows a coin or other object that is not sharp and they are having no signs of respiratory distress, they can be seen in the office or take your child to ExpressCare or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit [mysouthwell.com/convenient care](http://mysouthwell.com/convenient-care) to view their hours of operation.

➤ **Other situations that require emergency care:**

- **Large lacerations or cuts with bleeding**
- **Seizure lasting longer than 2 minutes in a child who has never had a seizure**
- **Difficulty breathing or bluish tinge to lips, skin, fingertips**
- **Severe abdominal pain**
- **Severe burns**
- **Severe bone fractures**
- **Vomiting or coughing up blood**
- **Severe dehydration**
- **New or worsening psychiatric or behavioral issues**

These are situations where you should call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.

Some situations require care for illness or injury, but not emergency care. The following are situations where the child can be seen during regular office hours or at ExpressCare or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care in Adel. Visit mysouthwell.com/convenient care to view their hours of operation.

- Minor burns
- Earache
- Pink eye
- Potential Urinary Tract Infection
- Sore throat or potential strep throat
- Rashes and mild skin infections
- Gastrointestinal illness, such as vomiting and diarrhea with mild dehydration
- Simple wounds
- Foreign objects in ears and nose
- Cold and cough
- Allergies

ExpressCare or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care are both available to see infants 6 months or older on the weekends and weekdays before your pediatrician office opens and after their office closes. They are a great option for coughs, colds, fever, vomiting and diarrhea and minor injuries.

Please contact your Pediatrician at Affinity Pediatrics, Ocilla Pediatrics or Southwell Medical Adel Primary Care. Our office hours vary. Check out mysouthwell.com for directions and office hours.