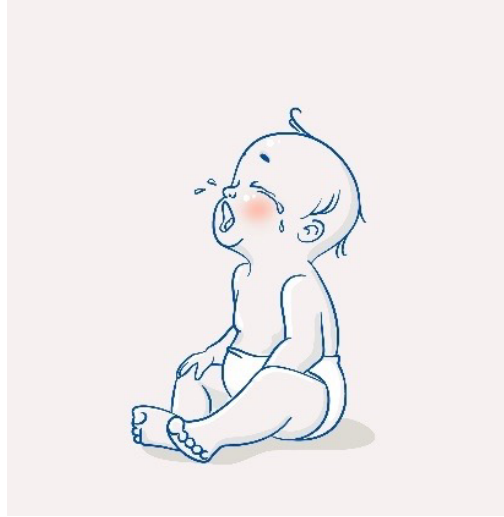


How to Care for Your Child with Breath Holding

This leaflet will provide you with information about breath holding in infants, including its causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and home care advice.



What is Breath Holding?

Breath holding is when a young child stops breathing for a short time, usually after crying hard, being scared, or getting hurt. It can be very scary to see, but it usually doesn't cause any long-term harm. It is most common in children aged 6 months to 6 years.

What causes Breath Holding?

Breath holding is often triggered by:

- Being upset or frustrated
- Getting scared or startled
- Experiencing sudden pain

What are the symptoms of Breath Holding?

During a breath holding spell, you might notice your child:

- Stops breathing for a few seconds
- Turns pale or blue around the lips
- Faints briefly
- Goes limp or stiff

How is Breath Holding diagnosed?

The doctor will ask few questions about your child's health and examine your child. Your doctor will decide if further investigation or blood tests are required.

How is Breath Holding treated?

Most of the time, no treatment is needed. Helping your child stay calm and avoiding known triggers can reduce the number of episodes. Rarely, if the spells are very frequent or severe, the doctor might suggest medicine.

Home care advice

- Stay calm: Try to remain calm during the spell, as your reaction can affect your child.
- Keep your child safe: Make sure they are in a place where they cannot hurt themselves.
- Comfort your child: After the episode, comfort and reassure them.
- Keep a record: Note down how often the spells happen, how long they last, and what triggers them, and share this with your doctor.

When should I seek medical advice?

Go to the nearest emergency department if your child:

- Has frequent breath holding spells
- Has episodes that last more than a minute
- Shows signs of developmental delays or other health concerns
- Has breath holding spells without an obvious cause

Call 999 if your child:

- Stays unconscious for a long time
- Has a seizure during a breath holding spell
- Has trouble breathing after the episode

Sidra Medicine cares about your health. The information in this leaflet should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and the advice of your doctor. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions. You can find us on www.sidra.org