

Respiratory Distress

Most colds come with cough and congestion. The congestion can cause a child to breathe heavier or sound noisy. There is a difference between noisy breathing, labored breathing and respiratory distress.

What are signs and symptoms of respiratory distress?

- *Use of accessory muscles*: retractions (ribs spreading apart), stomach heaving in to pull air, nostrils flaring out
- *Breathing rapidly*: 40-60 breathes per minute
- *Labored breathing*: breathing heavier than usual
- *Lethargy*: unable to wake child up (can happen if child has had labored breathing for an extended time period)

If my child has labored breathing, but is not in respiratory distress, what can I do?

- Suction the nose- especially with infants; can use a bulb suction or nosefrida
- Make sure your child is comfortable and not sleeping in an awkward position
- Supportive care- fluids for hydration, adequate sleep and monitoring

Should my child be seen by a provider?

- *Emergent*- significant respiratory distress that does not go away; go to Pediatric Emergency Dept or call 911
- *Urgent*- mild respiratory distress, but child stable; walk-in clinic in the morning, office visit or urgent care clinic after hours or weekends
- *Routine*- Cough that is not improving or is concerning. Schedule a same day office visit.