



Dr. Atul Rane

M.B.B.S., M.D. (Paediatrics)
Full Time Consultant - Paediatrician
Dr. L H Hiranandani Hospital Thane

What is wheezing?

Wheezing is a whistling sound made while breathing; because of turbulent air passing through the narrow airways of our lungs. Since children have small airways, any lower respiratory tract infection can cause wheezing.

The wheeze may be audible to ears when severe or on auscultation of chest to your kid's doctor during a check up.



Who is a wheezer?

Any child less than 5 years of age who develops wheezing again & again during any episode of chest infection or from environmental exposure to any trigger like dust, smoke, pollen, mites etc is called a wheezer.

There are episodic viral wheezers (those who wheeze only during viral infections) and there are multi trigger wheezers (those who wheeze due to multiple triggers).

What are common causes of wheezing?

Any condition or disease that can constrict the airways will lead to wheezing in your child.

Viral infections most commonly cause wheezing in children less than 1 year of age.

Later onwards, childhood asthma is a very common cause of wheezing in toddlers and older children.

What is childhood asthma?

Childhood asthma is chronic illness of the respiratory airways with a recurrent yet reversible tendency to wheeze. This wheezing can be triggered by multiple factors like infection, dust, smoke, dust mite, pet fur, climate change etc on a regular basis. However 70-80% of asthma occurs because of allergy and allergen exposure.

Finding the exact cause for asthma in your child is not easy and the insidious trigger may not be so evident and easily picked upfront. Usually there are multiple confounding factors present simultaneously overlapping each other. Hence predicting an asthma attack and its trigger becomes very difficult in day to day routine.

CHILDHOOD ASTHMA

Not all that wheezes is asthma!

While wheezing is just one of the common symptoms of asthma; it still maybe a part of many other disorders like Bronchiectasis, cystic fibrosis, GERD, aspiration pneumonia, foreign body aspiration, etc.

Symptoms of asthma :

When your child has wheezing and/ or asthma he will have the following signs and symptoms :

- Recurrent cough
- Recurrent cold and sneezing
- Night time symptoms
- Requiring frequent nebulisation
- Breathlessness
- Fast breathing
- Fatigue & restlessness



How to diagnose asthma?

In case your child gets the above symptoms frequently, visit your doctor or a asthma specialist.

Asthma is a clinical diagnosis usually unless atypical features exist. Your doctor may advise you an X ray and allergy testing in case the need arises.

Some routine blood tests and lung function tests depending on the age of your child and the disease severity; may have to be done.

Treatment of wheezing :

Whenever your child has an attack of wheezing; take him to a healthcare setup nearby. The doctors there will usually provide the following line of treatment :

- Oxygen by nasal cannula or mask
- Hydration
- Frequent suctioning of nasal secretions
- Reliever therapy comprising of bronchodilator medications via nebulisations or inhalers

On follow up visit after discharge :

In case your child gets wheezing every 1-2 months or severe attacks with complications;

Your doctor may start your child on something called as controller therapy.

It includes medications like inhaled steroids, anti allergic medications, immunotherapy

Role of parents if their child is a wheezer :

Be aware :

- Of the illness.
- All wheezers will not develop asthma but some can.
- Of the triggers. And if possible-avoid them.
- Consult a doctor if wheezing or associated symptoms occur again and again. Your child may have asthma!! And the earlier you treat, the better it is.



Dr. Rupali Pavaskar
MBBS, DDV

Visiting Consultant Dermatologist
Hiranandani Hospital Thane

COMMON SKIN INFECTIONS IN CHILDREN

There is a mixed reaction about childhood infections in society. On one extreme are those who consider these skin problems as a part of growing up, ignore it and allow the spread of infection to others. On the other extreme are those for whom this is such a taboo situation that they don't even take a consultation and pray that it passes away before someone notices it. Some vigilant parents do get their kids early for treatment and that helps in earlier freedom from the dreaded skin infections.

We must remember that in Thane, especially due to persistent constructions, pollution levels are at the topmost. To add to this is the growing population, growing capacity of the classrooms, the sweltering heat of the sun and undesirable but rampant use of medicated stuff (heavily marketed through advertisements); infections are bound to happen. There is nothing disgraceful about it. Here is a list of most commonly encountered skin infections for which you need to run to your Dermatologist at the earliest.

Infections can be caused by either bacteria, virus, fungus or protozoa.

1. Bacterial Infections :

a. Impetigo

Impetigo is a highly contagious streptococcal (a type of bacteria) infection. It can be of two types : bullous (fluid filled blisters) and non-bullous (honey coloured crusts). The infection spreads through hand contact or entry of the bacteria through open wound due to any reason. A simple antibiotic cream may suffice if the treatment is taken early. Late cases need an oral



antibiotic course.

b. Folliculitis

Folliculitis is an infection of the hair follicles caused by either bacterial infection or physical (pulling of hair) or chemical irritation (medicated oil). Excessive sweating, pre-existing eczema or reduced immunity are the driving factors for this infection. Lack of early treatment may drive the infection further down the follicle causing permanent loss of the affected hair.



2. Viral Infections :

a. Herpes simplex



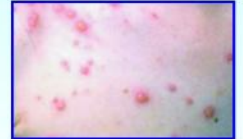
Herpes simplex virus (HSV) causes grouped fluid filled blisters on the lip borders at any particular location. Since it is a recurrent infection, these fever blisters keep on appearing each time a child gets fever or immunity dips down. A short course of oral

antiviral medicine is essential to settle the infection at the earliest. In case a child gets more than 3-4 episodes per year, he

or she should be given a 6 month antiviral course to reduce the repeat episodes.

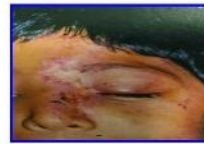
b. Varicella (Chicken pox)

Chicken pox is a highly contagious infection caused by Varicella zoster virus presenting in the form of clear fluid filled blisters on red base all over the body along with fever. Early treatment in the form of the anti viral medicines and isolation is essential to reduce the suffering of the child and to prevent spread of infection.



c. Herpes zoster

The virus of chicken pox tends to stay inside our body in a nerve in inactive form, even after complete recovery. When the immunity dips down, the virus is reactivated and affects the nerve and the skin area to which the nerve supplies sensations. Delay in treatment can cause severe side effects such as damage to the nerve, loss of function and



scarring to the skin.

d. Molluscum contagiosum

This viral infection is a very commonly seen infection in which white coloured pearl like firm boils appear on the face or hands of the child. Due to the lack of any effective oral medicines or creams, these boils need to be manually removed. Delay in treatment causes the boils to multiply in large numbers thereby increasing the distress of the child while performing the procedures.



3. Fungal infections :

a. Tinea versicolor



b. Tinea corporis



Fungal infections have become extremely common and resistant to treatment, thanks to the rampant misuse of various skin creams without Dermatologist's guidance. Do not self medicate and take prompt treatment from your Dermatologist.

4. Protozoal infections :

a. Pediculosis

Nits and lice are commonly seen in school going children and there is nothing alarming about it. Early detection and treatment helps in transmission of the same to other family members. Keep a close check on the kids who frequently complain of itching on the scalps.



b. Scabies

Itching on the entire body but more on the hands (specially the space between the fingers), feet, belly button, underarms and private areas without any prominently visible boils indicate scabies infection. Usually more than one family members are affected due to the rapid spread. A person acquiring scabies from someone else will start complaining only after a month, hence while treating scabies the entire family or people sharing the house need to be treated simultaneously irrespective of whether they complain of itching or not.



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Hamilton 'B' Hiranandani Estate, Off Ghodbunder Rd, Patlipada, Thane (W)- 400 607, India.

Tel.: 2545 8666/8667, 6799 8444/ 8555. Fax.: 2586 1791

For OPD appointment- thaneopdvisit@hiranandanihospital.org

Write to us at thinfo@hiranandanihospital.org

Website: www.hiranandanihospital.org



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