

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Evelina London's paediatric accident and emergency department

t: 0207 188 2111

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Mon to Fri

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department. **t:** 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)
e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch: **t:** 020 7188 8815
e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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Neutropenia



What is neutropenia?

Neutrophils are a type of blood cell, made by the bone marrow, that helps our bodies fight infections.

Neutropenia means there are low numbers of these infection-fighting cells in the blood. A child with neutropenia is more at risk of becoming unwell with an infection as the body is less able to fight the infection.

My child has been diagnosed with neutropenia. What does that mean?

There are different types of neutropenia, based on two factors:

- 1) how low the number of neutrophils in the blood is (mild, moderate or severe).
- 2) what has caused the neutrophils to be low.

Most cases of neutropenia are due to an infection, because the neutrophils are “used up” to fight the infection.

This type of neutropenia is mild and only short-term (usually referred to as ‘transient’). There is nothing wrong with the bone marrow, which can make more neutrophils. The number of neutrophils in the blood quickly returns to normal.

This form of neutropenia is not dangerous. The doctor might want to repeat a blood test after 4-6 weeks to be sure that the number of cells has returned to normal once your child has completely recovered from the infection.

Some other forms of mild neutropenia are due to differences in ethnicity. Children of Afro Caribbean or African heritage often have slightly lower numbers of neutrophils, but this does not affect their ability to fight infections.

If your child has a very low neutrophil count, what is known as a severe neutropenia, or if your child is unwell or has other abnormal blood test results, then he/she might need to be admitted into hospital for treatment with intravenous antibiotics or further tests to find out why the number of neutrophils in the blood is so low.

I have been told that my child can go home today. Is there anything that I should be looking for?

Because low neutrophils mean it is more difficult for our bodies to fight infections, you must return to the Children’s Emergency Department if your child has any of the following:

- Your child has a mild or moderate neutropenia and has an infection and the fever does not go down after five days.
- Your child has a severe neutropenia and develops a temperature of 38° C or above or is cold with a temperature of 36° C or below.
- If your child looks unwell, is sleepier or more irritable than usual.
- If your child’s heartbeat or breathing are unusually fast.
- If your child’s feet or hands are cold.
- If you see a non-blanching rash (a rash that does not disappear when you press a clear glass tumbler against it – this is called tumbler test).