



Lymphadenitis/Lymphadenopathy

Patient and Family Education

What is lymphadenitis and lymphadenopathy?

Lymphadenitis is an infection in the lymph nodes. Lymph nodes are glands that are part of the immune system. They help the body fight infection by filtering germs. They become enlarged when infection is present.

Lymphadenopathy is usually a normal response of the lymph nodes to an infection elsewhere in the body.

What are the causes?

Lymphadenitis is usually seen with a viral or bacterial infection. Common infections that can cause enlarged lymph nodes are Strep throat, impetigo, infected acne, dental abscesses and mononucleosis. Tuberculosis (TB) can also cause lymphadenitis or lymphadenopathy.

What are the possible symptoms?

Your child may have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Tenderness, redness or warmth in the area of the lymph node
- Fever
- Lymph node enlargement

What is the treatment?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about specific care for your child. Some general guidelines to follow include:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol® or other less costly store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil® or other less costly store brand) may be given for pain. Follow the directions on the box carefully or ask your child's doctor how much medicine to give.
 - Do not give your child more than 5 doses of acetaminophen in a 24-hour period.
 - Do not give acetaminophen to babies less than 3 months of age without a doctor's order.
 - Do not give ibuprofen to babies less than 6 months of age without a doctor's order.
- Antibiotics if the cause is due to bacteria. Viral infections do not need antibiotics.
- Referral to a dentist if a tooth is abscessed.
- Use hot moist compresses if it makes your child feel better. Be sure the compresses are not hot enough to burn your child's skin.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if:

- Fever or tenderness for more than 24 hours or as advised by your child's doctor
- The lymph nodes keep getting larger even after five to seven days of treatment
- The lymph nodes decrease in size but stay larger than normal for more than two months
- There is new or increased redness in the area of the lymph nodes
- It is hard for your child to swallow or breathe

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.