

Fever

What is a fever?

- Fever is a body temperature of 100.4 or higher taken orally, axillary, rectally or in the ear. Do not add anything to the measurement you obtained. Just be sure to tell us how you took your child's temperature.
- Fever is a natural response to an infection
- Fever is NOT a disease
- Fever is NOT dangerous
- Fever is NOT a bad thing that needs immediate treatment all the time

When to treat

You treat your child's fever when the fever makes him/her uncomfortable or lethargic (less active). Often fever will cause a child to feel achy or irritable. Fever can make your child have a headache. These are examples of when to treat your child's fever.

You do not need to treat your child if he/she is sleeping at night with a fever. Your child will wake up and cry out if he/she needs treatment.

Children usually run higher fevers than adults with the same illness.

How to treat

Dress your child in lightweight clothing

Use layers of sheets to cover your child if he/she complains of being cold or is shivering. This way, if your child gets hot, he/she may remove some layers.

AVOID dressing your child in heavy sleepers or pajamas

Make sure your child gets plenty of liquids to drink

- When the fever is high, your child may not want to drink. Give Tylenol or Ibuprofen (advil/motrin) to bring the fever down and then offer and encourage liquids
- Your young infant needs to be offered small amounts of liquids more often when they are running a fever

For fevers above 104.0 degrees F that do not respond to treatment with acetaminophen and ibuprofen, you may try giving your child a LUKEWARM OR TEPID bath. DO NOT give your child a bath in COLD water because this may cause her/him to shiver which increases the body temperature.

DO NOT SPONGE BATHE YOUR CHILD WITH RUBBING ALCOHOL. This may be absorbed through the skin and poison your child.

Specific fever-reducers

- Tylenol (acetaminophen) – 6 mg. per pound, every 4-6 hours. This available in different form including suppository. They are all over-the-counter
- Motrin/Advil (ibuprofen) – 4 mg. per pound, every 6-8 hours. This is also available in different forms (not suppository) and all forms over-the-counter
- Do not use aspirin because of the increased risk of Reye's Syndrome

When to call

During office hours:

- If your child is older and has had a fever for 3 days or more (without any other symptoms)

Urgently (contact us during office hours or after hours):

--If your child is older and has fever accompanied by:

- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Headache

EMERGENTLY (contact us during office hours or have us paged if it is after hours):

--If your child is under 2 months of age and has a temperature greater than 100.4 degrees F.

--If fever is 105 degrees F. or greater

--If your child has a fever accompanied by:

- **Stiff neck**
- **Lethargy**
- **Inconsolable crying**
- **Irritability**
- **Severe headache**
- **Confusion**
- **Difficulty breathing**

It is safe and we advise you to give your child one of the specific fever reducers first and then to call us.