

Education

FEVER

FEVER is a symptom, not a disease. Fever is the body's normal response to infections and plays a role in fighting them. Most fevers (100-104) that children get are not harmful. Many are caused by viral illnesses; some are caused by bacterial infections. (Barton D. Schmitt, MD, 1999)

Helpful Hints (Regardless of cause)

- * Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids
- * Dressing your child in thin, light layers is best
- * Sponging and cooling of the skin are NOT indicated and may cause seizures
- * Alcohol rubs are NOT indicated and may be harmful
- * Tell us how the temperature was taken. Rectal is the most accurate for infants. Under the arm is okay if done correctly. Oral for older children is appropriate. Ear temps may be inaccurate if not placed in the ear properly, if eardrum is blocked by wax, if there is a tube or the eardrum is inflamed. Pacifier and forehead strips often not accurate.

Medications (For discomfort due to fever and/or aches)

- * ACETAMINOPHEN (Tylenol) is easier on the stomach, shorter lasting, and can be given every 4-6 hours. Maximum of 5 doses within a 24-hour period. Don't use under 2 months of age unless directed by MD/NP. Also available as a suppository.
- * IBUPROFEN (Motrin & Advil) is longer lasting but should not be given if child is less than 6 months old, or is not eating well, or has any nausea or vomiting. It can be given every 6-8 hours.
- * Occasionally acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be alternated; this should only be done after discussing with MD/NP.

Call Back IF...

- * The fever lasts longer than 3 days
- * The fever is remaining over 103 for 4 hours or longer, or over 102 for 6 hours or longer, whether medication is given or not
- * The child has a specific complaint such as ear pain, sore throat, swollen or tender joint, pinpoint purple rash, bloody stools, painful urination or severe back and/or neck pain

Call immediately if...

- * A baby less than 8 weeks old has a rectal temperature = 100.4 or greater

FEBRILE SEIZURES OCCUR IN 3% OF CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS OLD (MOST OFTEN 1 TO 3 YEARS OLD). THESE ARE NOT HARMFUL TO THE CHILD AND NOT NECESSARILY RELATED TO THE HEIGHT OF THE FEVER. THE ABOVE ADVICE MAY HELP TO PREVENT THESE SEIZURES.