

First Aid and Home Care

Si usted desea esta información en español,
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

#1691

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Fever

What is it?

When body temperature is above normal, it is called a fever. Normal body temperature goes up and down throughout the day. It is usually lowest in the early morning and highest in the late afternoon.

If your child has a chronic medical condition, your child's doctor will give you more information about fevers and what to do.

Each part of the body where the temperature is measured has a different range of normal. A child has a fever if:

- oral temperature (under the tongue) is over 100° F (37.8° C)
- rectal temperature (in the rectum) is over 100.4° F (38.0° C)
- axillary (armpit) temperature is over 99.0° F (37.2° C)
- ear temperature is over 100.4° F (38.0° C)
- forehead temperature is over 100.4° F (38.0° C)



When body temperature is above normal, it is called a fever.

Armpit, ear, and forehead temperatures are easier to measure than oral or rectal temperatures, but they are not as accurate.

If you want to know more about this, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout: **How to Take Your Child's Temperature (#533).**

Signs of a fever:

Your child:

- feels warm or hot to the touch.
- has a pink or red face.
- feels sweaty.
- has a headache or feels sick to the stomach.
- shivers or complains of feeling cold.
- complains of muscle aches.
- does not want to eat, but may be more thirsty than usual.
- is tired and fussy.
- has trouble sleeping well.

If your child has any of these signs, take his or her temperature.

Call the doctor right away or take your child to the Emergency Department if your child:



- is under 3 months old and has a rectal temperature of 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher, even if your child seems fine.
- is between 3 months and 36 months old and has a rectal temperature of 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher and appears ill, or has a rectal temperature of 102° F (38.9° C) or higher.
 - is over 36 months old, has a fever higher than 102° F (38.9° C) and your child
 - had the fever for more than 48 hours.
 - is acting very sick.
 - is hard to wake up, is very sleepy, or seems confused.
 - has a seizure.
 - has trouble breathing or coughing.
 - has a stiff neck, a bad headache, a very sore throat, bad ear pain, a rash, throws up, or has loose stools.
 - cries when moved or the cry is more shrill than usual.
 - had a fever, it went away for more than 24 hours, and now the fever is back.
- has a central line and has a fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher, or has a fever of 100.4° F (38.0° C) two times, an hour apart.

- has an oral, rectal, ear, or forehead temperature of 104° F (40° C) or higher.
- has an armpit temperature of 103° F (39.4° C) or higher.
- has a fever and a chronic medical condition.
- whimpers and does not want to move around or play.
- will not drink fluids or seems too ill to drink.
- has a rash, purple spots, or bruising.
- is not peeing a normal amount or has less wet diapers.
- complains of pain when peeing.

Do at home:

For children under 3 months old:

If your child is under 3 months old and has a fever of 100.4° F (38.0° C), call the doctor or clinic right away. If it is after your doctor's office hours, take your child to Urgent Care or the Emergency Department.

For children between 3 months and 6 months old:

If your child is comfortable and is acting normal with fever less than 102° F, (38.9° C) you do not need to treat it. The body responds to infection with a fever to kill the bacteria or virus with body heat.

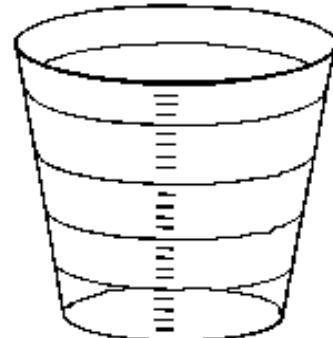
If your child is uncomfortable or has a fever, you can give children's acetaminophen (**Tylenol**) every 4 to 6 hours. Make sure to follow the directions on the bottle. The dose is based on weight, not age. If you are not sure how much to give, ask the pharmacist in the drug store.

- If you are giving the liquid form of this medicine, use a dropper, medicine cup, or marked measuring spoon. The teaspoons we use for eating are not exact measures.

- Before you give another dose of acetaminophen, always take your child's temperature to be sure your child needs medicine. This medicine usually brings the fever down 1 to 2 degrees. It may not bring the temperature down to normal. The purpose of this medicine is to make your child feel better, not make the fever disappear.
- If your child is throwing up, he or she may not be able to take medicine by mouth. You can buy acetaminophen that you can put into your child's rectum (suppository form). Children getting chemotherapy should not be given medicine by suppository.
- Dress your child in one layer of clothing. Do not add a blanket.

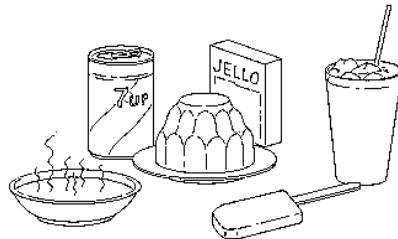
For children over 6 months old:

- Both acetaminophen and ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) can help bring down a fever. Carefully follow the directions on the bottle when giving these medicines. Do not give ibuprofen if your child is under 6 months old. Talk to your child's doctor about which medicine to give your child.
- Do not give ibuprofen if your child gets chemotherapy unless the doctor or nurse tells you to.
- When giving ibuprofen to children less than 12 years old, use only children's ibuprofen, not adult ibuprofen.
- Let your child play quietly or sleep. Being active can raise the temperature.
- Keep track of how much your child drinks. A fever causes the body to lose fluid faster. Make sure your child does not get too dry (**dehydrated**).
- Your child must drink, but do not force your child to eat solids if your child is not hungry.



If you are giving the liquid form of this medicine, use a dropper, medicine cup, or marked measuring spoon. The teaspoons we use for eating are not exact measures.

- Offer your child something to drink every 30 minutes, such as water, an electrolyte solution (**Pedialyte**), Jell-O, juice, ice pops, milk, Gatorade, decaffeinated soda pop and teas, or soup.
- Breastfeeding babies (under 1 years old) will probably get enough fluids from breastmilk to avoid being dehydrated. Talk to your child's doctor if you are concerned that your child is not getting enough fluids.
- Talk to your child's doctor before giving your infant any water or Pedialyte. The doctor will tell you the safe amount to give to your child.
- If your child is throwing up, he or she may not be able to take medicine by mouth. You can buy acetaminophen that you can put into your child's rectum (suppository form). Children getting chemotherapy should not be given medicine by suppository.



Offer your child something to drink every 30 minutes. Make sure your child does not get dehydrated.

If your child has a chronic medical condition, your child's doctor may give you different instructions on how to care for your child's fever.

You should know:

- Never give a child aspirin for fever control. It increases the risk of your child getting a serious illness that can cause brain or liver damage (**Reye's syndrome**).
- Your child's breathing and heart rate will become faster than normal with a high fever as the body tries to get rid of the heat.
- Fevers usually get higher later in the day and come down in the early morning.
- Children 2 to 5 years old may have fevers of up to 104° F with an illness as common as a cold. In a child over 8 years of age, fevers act like the fever of an adult.

- Besides viral and bacterial infections, there are many other causes for the body temperature to rise, such as:
 - exercise, especially in the heat.
 - very hot weather. Watch your child for other signs of heat stroke (dry or hot skin, fast breathing, fast pulse, confusion).
 - a hot bath.
 - putting too many clothes and blankets on the child, especially in infants.
 - not enough fluid in the body (dehydration).
 - blood transfusion.
 - some medicines.
- Your child should not go back to school or day care until your child's temperature has been normal for 24 hours.

If your child has a febrile seizure and you want to learn more about this, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout on **Febrile Seizures**, #256

Now that you've read this:

- Show your nurse or doctor how you would take your child's temperature.
(Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor when you would call the doctor about your child's temperature. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor how you would treat your child's fever.
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,
 call your child's doctor or call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness,
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
www.theemilycenter.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

November 7, 2016 • Draft to family review
#1691 Jodi Carter, MD and Jackie Beals, MSN, RN
Illustrated by Dennis Swain and Christine Remmel

Fever

Name of Health Care Provider: _____

Date returned: _____ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.

Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? Yes No

easy to read? Yes No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? Yes No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading
this handout? Yes No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any
questions about the subject? Yes No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings? Yes No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children's Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710
602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!