



Fever in Children

Fevers are very common in children; a common cold can cause a high fever. A fever is the body's natural response to an illness and helps the body fight off infection. A fever does not necessarily mean your child has a serious illness and is not considered harmful.

Most fevers are caused by viruses and your child may have many different symptoms including cough, runny nose, sore throat and irritability. Symptoms can last 7-10 days and the fever may come and go during this time, antibiotics will not cure viral infections.

How to care for your child with a fever:

- Give your child plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration
- Rest is important
- Remove extra blankets and clothing so they are wearing a single layer
- Make sure the room is not too hot or too cold
- If your child is miserable or is in pain you can give paracetamol, remember to follow instructions
- Reducing the fever will make your child more comfortable but it will not cure the illness
- Do not sleep in the same bed as your child as you may make the fevers worse

Go back to your doctor if your child:

- Is drinking less than half their normal fluid intake
- Has less than 4 wet nappies in 24 hours
- Complains of neck or head pain
- Complains of a sore throat or joint pains
- Is vomiting and not tolerating sips of fluid
- Has frequent or watery poos
- Is pale and clammy
- Is in pain: earache, tummy pain, cries when they wee
- Develops a rash especially dark purple spot
- Not improving or is getting worse in 2 days
- Has had a fever for more than 5 days

Please turn over for more information

Important to know in babies less than 3 months:

- Babies less than 3 months old with a fever should be seen by a doctor
- If you are worried about them, take them to see a doctor even if they do not have a fever
- Young babies have an unstable temperature, when they are sick their temperature may be low, this is a concerning sign and you should urgently see a doctor
- Babies under 3 months are not as good at fighting off infections as older children

You should call an ambulance (111) immediately if your child:

- Has blue lips and tongue
- Unusually sleepy or you are struggling to wake them
- Has severe difficulty breathing



- Has irregular breathing or pauses in their breathing
- Is disorientated or has a seizure

Key points to remember:

- Fever is very common in children
- Fevers is the body's natural response to an infection
- A fever is not usually associated with a serious illness but you should see a doctor if your child is less than 3 months or if they look very unwell
- The most effective way of cooling your child is to remove clothing so they are only wearing a single layer
- Paracetamol may decrease the fever but it will not make the illness go away