

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 lowest in the early morning and highest in the late afternoon.

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 99.5° F (37.5° C)
- rectal temperature (in the rectum)
is over 100.4° F (38.0° C)
- axillary (armpit) temperature is over 99.0° F (38.0° C)



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

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.
- eyes look glassy.
- 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 if it is after your doctor's office hours,
take your child to the Emergency Room if:**

- The child is under 3 months old and has a fever of 100.4° F (38.0° C) or more
- The child is between 3 months and 36 months old and has a fever higher than 102° F (38.9° C)
- The child is over 36 months old, has a fever higher than 102° F (38.9° C) and
 - The child had the fever for more than 48 hours and you don't know why
 - The child is acting very sick
 - It is hard to wake up the child
 - The child has a seizure
 - The child has trouble breathing
 - The child has a stiff neck, a bad headache, a very sore throat, bad ear pain, a rash, throws up, or has loose stool.
 - The child cries when moved
 - The child had a fever, it went away for more than 24 hours, and now the fever is back.
- The child has a central line and has a fever of 101° F (38.3° C)

Do at home:

For children under 3 months old

- If the 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 the child to Urgent Care or the Emergency Room.

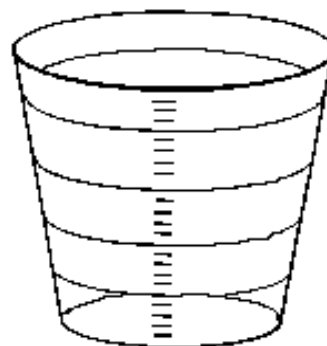
For children between 3 months and 36 months old

- If the child is comfortable, and is acting normally 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.
- Dress in one layer of clothing. Do not add a blanket.
- If the child is uncomfortable and the fever is more than 102° F (38.9° C), give children's acetaminophen (Tylenol) every 4 to 6 hours in the dose printed on the package. 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 the child's temperature to be sure the child needs it. This medicine usually brings the fever down 1 to 2 degrees. It may not bring the temperature down to normal. The purpose of the medicine is to make the child feel better, not make his or her 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.



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.

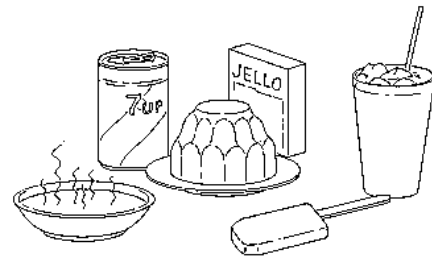
For children over 6 months old

- The medicine ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) can also be used to bring down a fever. Most doctors prefer acetaminophen, which can be given more often and leaves the body sooner. Do not give ibuprofen to children under 6 months old.
- Do not give ibuprofen to children getting chemotherapy unless the doctor or nurse tells you to. With children under 12, use only children's ibuprofen.
- Do not give acetaminophen and ibuprofen unless your doctor tells you to. If your doctor tells you to do this, carefully follow the directions.
- Let the 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**).

- The child must drink, but don't force him to eat solids if he is not hungry.

- If the feverish child is also vomiting or has diarrhea, give the child electrolyte solution (Pedialyte) from the store.



Keep track of how much fluid your child takes in. A fever causes the body to lose fluid faster.

Infants (under 1 year old)

- Breast feeding babies will probably get enough fluids from breast milk.

- Talk to your child's doctor before giving your infant water. The doctor will tell you the safe amount.

For children 1 to 5 years old

- Offer your child something to drink every half-hour.

For children over 5 years old

- If your child does not have diarrhea, give your child a full glass of fluid every two hours. This fluid may be water, Jell-O, decaffeinated soda pop and teas, juice, milk, ice pops, Gatorade, or soup.



Call the doctor or clinic if the child:

- looks and acts sicker than you would expect from the child's temperature.
- has a fever is between 104°F (40° C) and 105°F (40.6° C).
- whimpers and does not want to move around or play.
- seems unusually sleepy, hard to awake, or confused.
- will not drink fluids, or seems too ill to drink.
- has an earache or a stiff neck.
- has loose stools or is throwing up.
- has a rash, purple spots, or bruising.
- has a seizure.
- has trouble breathing or coughing.
- cries when moved or is unable to be consoled. Cry is more shrill than usual.
- has chills.
- has had a fever for more than 48 hours and there is no known reason.
- is not urinating as often as usual. (Diapers barely damp or not having to change them as often as usual.)
- complains of pain on urination.
- the fever went away for more than 24 hours, and then returned.

You should know:

- Never give a child aspirin. It increases the risk your child could get Reye's syndrome.
- Fevers cannot be accurately measured with a thermometer strip placed on the forehead or ear thermometer.
- Your child's breathing will become faster than normal with a high fever as the body tries to get rid of the heat through the lungs.
- Fevers usually get higher later in the day and come down in the early morning.
- Most children can handle high fevers, but a few will have seizures. These seizures happen when the fever rises very quickly, not because the fever is extremely high. About 4 percent of children between the ages of 6 months to 6 years will have

a seizure from a fever. Some will only have one, while other children may have a seizure the next time their temperatures rise rapidly. This is not the same as epilepsy, and children outgrow this.

If you want to learn more about this, ask your nurse or doctor for the handout on **Febrile Seizures, #256**

- Higher fevers don't mean that the illness is more serious, especially in children under 8 years of age. 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 heat or when overbundled
 - very hot weather. Watch the child for other signs of heat stroke (dry, hot skin, fast breathing, fast pulse, confusion)
 - Hot bath
 - putting too many clothes and blankets on the child, especially in infants
 - not enough fluid in the body (dehydration)
 - blood transfusion
 - certain medications

- After your child has had a fever, he shouldn't go back to school or day care until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours.

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
602-546-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.com

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.

Thursday, March 13, 2008 • DRAFT to family review
#666 • From Do At Home or Call the Doctor; revised by Eileen Mitchell, MN, RN and Jackie Beals
Illustrated by Dennis Swain



The Emily Center

Fever

First Aid and Home Care

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

Name of Health Care Provider: _____ Number: 666

For office use: Date returned: _____ db nb

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.

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Thank you for helping us!