

Call the doctor if your child:

- Has had a fever for more than 24 hours in a child younger than 2 years.
- Has had a fever for more than 3 days in a child older than 2 years.
- Has a fever and is vomiting.
- Has not had all recommended immunizations.
- Has a stiff neck or a bad headache.
- Is confused or difficult to wake up.
- Is not using an arm or leg or any joint, or has a joint that is red, swollen, or warm (elbow, knee, hip, etc.).
- Has a rash and a fever.
- Is complaining of ear pain that doesn't go away (lasting longer than 12 hours).
- Isn't drinking fluids like juice, water, or formula (See Vomiting and Diarrhea sections for information about dehydration).
- Is breathing differently or having trouble breathing.
- Has a seizure or has a history of seizures with fevers.
- Is complaining of pain with urinating (peeing).
- Has a sore throat, but no other cold symptoms (runny nose, congestion, cough).

Call

Fever in INFANTS aged 3 months or younger

A baby's body cannot fight off infections the same way older children's can. They are more likely to have a serious illness when they have a fever; so ALL babies with a fever who are under 3 months of age need to be seen by a doctor.

- An infant with a temperature of 100.4° F or greater measured rectally **MUST** see a doctor.
- Always speak to your child's doctor before giving any medication.

Fever in children aged 3 months to 3 years old

- For children older than 3 months, but younger than 3 years old, call a doctor if your child has a fever higher than 102.2° F.
- For children in this age group with a temperature below 102.2° F, call your doctor if the child is uncomfortable or fever has lasted two to three days. The illness is probably not serious if your child is:

- Eating, drinking, and peeing well
- Sleeping well
- Able to play
- Alert and smiling

What else can you do to treat a fever in children older than 6 months?

- Keep the room comfortably cool.
- Dress the child in lightweight clothing.
- Encourage fluids:
 - Water
 - Soup
 - Fruit juices
 - Oral electrolyte solutions such as Pedialyte®
- Allow rest: Do not let children overexert themselves.
- Bathe/sponge the child with lukewarm water. Avoid using cold water, ice baths, or rubbing alcohol.

Treatments:

Treating a Fever: Medications

- Never give medicine to an infant under 3 months for a fever before talking to your child's pediatrician.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) are commonly used to treat fevers in older children. Remember any medication can be dangerous. Use the information provided with the medicine to treat your child's fever.

Take Note:

Always

Always read the dosage information before giving your child a fever medicine. There are different strengths of the same medicine (for example, Infant Tylenol® Drops versus Children's Tylenol® Syrup) so their doses will be different for the same child.

Never

Never give a child aspirin unless specifically directed by your child's doctor. Aspirin can cause serious problems in children and is only used in rare occasions for specific diseases.

A fever is a body temperature that is higher than normal. It is the body's way of fighting off infection and therefore it does not always need to be treated.

Fevers are very commonly seen in childhood illnesses, including respiratory (lung) and gastrointestinal (stomach) infections. In addition to raising a child's temperature, fevers can also make a child's breathing and heart beat faster. Children often feel uncomfortable and irritable when they have a fever and don't want to play. This crankiness improves when the fever goes away. Kids' fevers tend to come and go, especially when they are getting fever medicine. They may be playful one minute and grumpy the next. This is normal.

Fevers are treated differently depending on the age and health of the child. To find out if your child has a fever, take your child's temperature using a digital thermometer. Your child may feel warm to the touch, and not have a fever.