

Causes

Fever is a symptom, not a disease. Fever is not harmful or dangerous and will not cause kidney or brain damage. Fever is almost always caused by infection. The most common infections to cause fever are viral infections like a cold or stomach flu. Beyond comfort measures, these require no treatment. Antibiotics are of no use in viral infections. Remember, antibiotics treat bacterial infections, not fever.

The degree of fever does not tell us how sick your child is. Though high fevers are less common in adolescents and adults, they are common in children. Children can have a fever of 104°F with a cold or a fever of 100.5°F with pneumonia. How your child is acting and the presence of other symptoms are the most important indicators of the cause of a fever.

Symptoms

Though average body temperature is 98.6°F, normal body temperature can run from 98°F to 100.1°F during the course of a day. **Fever is defined as body temperature over 100.3°F.** When children have fevers, they are often listless, achy, and have poor appetites.

We recommend a digital thermometer (about \$10 at any drug store) because it is accurate and easy to read. We do not recommend an “ear thermometer.” Glass thermometers are inexpensive and accurate, but they take practice to use correctly. Rectal temperatures are the best indicator of body temperature in an infant less than 3 months old. **Call us immediately for any fever in an infant less than 3 months old.**

Treatment

Because fever is not harmful, all treatment should be directed at making your child comfortable. We do not recommend sponging or bathing a child to bring down fever unless it makes them more comfortable. Do not use alcohol rubs.

For recommended dosages of fever medicines, see the back of this page. Do not use aspirin to treat fever in children. Aspirin has some rare but dangerous side effects in children.

Call the office if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Excessive irritability or sleepiness (crankiness and sleepiness should improve when the fever drops)
- Difficulty breathing (not just nasal congestion or cough)
- Fever persisting beyond 3 days
- Earache or sore throat
- Refusal of all liquids for any prolonged period
- Red streaks, swelling, or tenderness around a cut or scratch
- Severe vomiting, abdominal pain, or refusal to walk or move because of pain
- Any unusual or worrisome symptoms such as stiff neck or bruise-like rash

Fever Medicines

The following are only suggestions. Read all medicine labels before giving any medicine. Call the office with any questions. Remember, if your child is playful and happy, do not treat him with anything. Weight is the best way to determine a child's dose. If your child is an average size, you may dose by age. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) doses must be given at least 4 hours apart. Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) doses must be given at least 6 hours apart. **Some studies suggest that repeated acetaminophen use is associated with a higher risk of allergy and asthma. We recommend avoiding acetaminophen use when possible. If you have acetaminophen infant drops with a concentration of 80mg/0.8ml, throw them away. Only use acetaminophen 160mg/tsp or 160mg/5ml.**

Recommended dosages of Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Pediacare, store brands)

Weight (lbs)	6-11 lbs	12-17 lbs	18-23 lbs	24-35 lbs	36-47 lbs
Age	0-3 months	4-11 months	12-23 months	2-3 years	4-5 years
Dose (mg)	40mg	80mg	120mg	160mg	240mg
Suspension: (160mg/tsp)	¼ teaspoon or 1.25 ml	½ teaspoon or 2.5 ml	¾ teaspoon or 3.75 ml	1 teaspoon or 5 ml	1 ½ tsp or 7.5 ml

Recommended dosages of Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, store brands)

Weight (lbs)	< 12 lbs.	12-17 lbs	18-23 lbs	24-35 lbs	36-47 lbs
Age	0-6 mo	6-11 mo	12-23 mo	2-3 yrs	4-5 yrs
Dose (mg)	----	50mg	75mg	100mg	150mg
Infant Drops: (50mg/1.25ml)	Do not use	1.25ml	1.875ml	----	----
Children's Liquid: (100mg/tsp)	Do not use	½ teaspoon or 2.5 ml	¾ teaspoon or 3.75 ml	1 teaspoon or 5 ml	1 ½ tsp or 7.5 ml