

## FEVER CONTROL IN CHILDREN

Fever is a sign that your child's body may be fighting off a viral or bacterial infection. Fever is the body's way to boost the immune system to help fight infections. If you think your child has a fever [temperature above 100.4° F (38.0° C)], take their temperature. While a mom's hand on the forehead is reasonably accurate at detecting that there is a fever, it is not precise in determining the actual temperature. Temperature readings are different depending on what part of the body you use.

Rectal or Temporal (forehead): no change	Oral (by mouth) 1° F (1/2° C)
Axillary (armpit): add 2° F (1° C)	Tympanic (ear) 1/2° F (1/4° C)

### ***Why Do We Treat a Fever?***

Fevers are usually not dangerous for most children and infants over the age of 3 months. Most fevers do not lead to brain damage or death. Although some children have seizures when they have a fever, medicines used to treat fever do not always prevent these seizures. The main reason we treat fevers is to keep your child comfortable so they will eat, drink, or sleep. If your child has a mild fever but is playing, drinking fluids, and generally acting well, there is no reason to treat the fever. Medicines used to treat fever do not make infection go away faster. Medicines used to treat fever may not make your child's temperature come all the way down to normal [98.6° F (37.0° C)]. Call your doctor if your child has a fever and is less than 3 months old, if the fever has lasted more than 24 hours, or if your child is also vomiting.

### ***How to Treat Fever***

The most commonly used medicines to treat fever are Acetaminophen (*Tylenol* and others) and Ibuprofen (*Motrin, Advil*, others). When used as recommended, Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen have few side effects and are quite safe. These medicines come in drops for infants, liquid ("elixir") for toddlers, and chewable tablets for older children. The infant drops are more concentrated than the liquid elixir for toddlers. Be careful switching back and forth between different products or you may give your child too much or too little medicine. Read the directions on the label. DO NOT give your child aspirin for their fever as aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome.

A low grade fever boosts the immune response and is not necessary to treat. Because higher fevers (over 101° F) may put unnecessary stress on the body (increased: heart rate, respiratory rate, metabolism, fluid losses), treat for one day (rather than 1 dose) with Ibuprofen every 6 hours or Acetaminophen every 4 hours (while awake). Repeat another day if the fever is found to again go over 101 degrees. If you have given Ibuprofen in the last 6 hours and the fever is still over 101° F, then you may give an additional dose of Acetaminophen (as often as every 4 hours). If the next dose is due within an hour of going to bed, it's OK to take it early.

- To avoid making mistakes, read the label before you open the bottle and again after you measure a dose.
- Do not give more or less medicine and do not give it more frequently than recommended.
- Many allergy, cold, and flu medications also contain Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen. Check with your pharmacist before combining medications.
- When giving your child a liquid medication, do not use standard tableware tablespoons and teaspoons because they usually are not accurate. Instead, use a measuring device such as a syringe, dropper, dosing spoon, cooking measuring spoon, or medicine cup.

### ***Other Ways to Keep Your Child Comfortable***

- If shivering, give a dose of Ibuprofen (or Acetaminophen) and keep your child warm until the shivering stops. If not shivering, remove your child's warm clothes and encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.
- Keep your child rested, quiet, and comfortable in a cool room.
- Place a cool washcloth on your child's forehead or sponge them with lukewarm water. If sponge bathing, make sure the water doesn't get cold, and stop if your child starts to shiver.
- Never use rubbing alcohol to cool your child's skin. It can be absorbed through the skin and harm your child.

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