



Fever In Children

What is a fever?

Fever is when the body temperature rises above 38°C. A normal temperature range for a child is usually up to 38°C. A high fever does not necessarily mean your child has a serious illness. The fever seen in common childhood infections is not harmful and in fact it helps the body's immune system fight off the infection.

Fever is often caused by a virus, and sometimes by bacteria. Viral infections are far more common and do not need antibiotics. Antibiotics do not cure viruses. Only bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.

Treating a fever

There is no advantage to lowering your child's temperature except for comfort. Treat your child by making them more comfortable; give clear fluids and paracetamol if the fever is making your child miserable.

Febrile convulsions

A few children can have convulsions (a "fit") when they have a fever. This may happen if your child's temperature goes up suddenly. Sometimes, a convulsion happens when parents don't actually know their child has a fever. Febrile convulsions are not common and do not usually cause any long-term health effects.

Treatment

See your doctor if your child has the following symptoms with their fever

- Complaining of a stiff neck or light hurting their eyes
- Vomiting and refusing to drink much
- A rash
- More sleepy than usual
- Problems with breathing
- Or if your child is in pain

At home care

Treat your child at home by making them more comfortable:

- Dress your child in enough clothing so they are not shivering
- Tepid sponging and fanning children with fevers is NOT recommended
- Give your child frequent small drinks of clear fluid. If your child is less than 6 months old give extra breastfeeds, cooled boiled water or bottles
- Do not worry if your child refuses to eat at this time
- Watch your child for signs that their illness is getting worse
- Give paracetamol if your child's fever is above 38.5°C and your child is miserable or has other symptoms such as sore throat.