

Fever

Fever is a rectal temperature of greater than 100.6 degrees Fahrenheit (F) and does not need to be treated unless your child is uncomfortable. Fever is a sign that your child is fighting off an infection. It helps kill viruses and bacteria.

A high fever does not necessarily indicate a more serious infection. Some children run high fevers with only minor infections. In children from age 6 months until 6 years, these fevers can be very high. It is more important to watch your child's behavior to determine how ill he or she is.

Taking your baby's temperature

You should take rectal or axillary (armpit) temperatures in children until four or five years of age. Strips of paper which indicate the temperature when applied to the forehead are not very accurate and should not be used as a guide to your child's true temperature. Ear thermometers are not very accurate in young children.

Clean the thermometer with rubbing alcohol after each use.

Rectal temperature: normal range 98.0 - 100.4F

1. Lay your baby on his stomach and spread his legs apart so you can see his anus.
2. Lubricate the bulb of the thermometer with petroleum jelly or some other lubricant.
3. Hold the thermometer between your thumb and forefinger the way you would hold a pencil. Rest the heel of your hand on the child's buttocks, and slowly and gently insert the thermometer into the child's anus about 3/4 inch.
4. Hold the thermometer in place until the temperature is measured.
5. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature.

Axillary temperature: normal range 97.0 - 99.6F

1. Make sure your infant is dry and has no clothing in the armpit.
2. Carefully place the dry thermometer high up in your child's armpit.
3. Hold your child's arm close against his body.
4. Hold the thermometer in place until the temperature is measured.
5. Remove the thermometer and read the temperature.

You do not need to call the doctor immediately when your child has a fever, ***unless your child is less than two months old***. If your child's fever is present for a second day, call your doctor to discuss your baby's symptoms and the need for an appointment.

What to do for fever

- Measure the temperature
- Dress your child lightly. Overdressing your child will increase his body temperature.
- Do not overheat the house, especially the bedroom.
- Provide plenty of liquids.
- Look up your child's weight at his last doctor's visit, and give him the correct dose of acetaminophen (i.e., Tylenol) for his weight.
- If the fever lasts more than 24 hours without an obvious cause, call your doctor.

How to sponge-bathe your child

If your child's temperature is less than 104.0F, medicine alone is enough. If his temperature is higher than 104.0F, you may sponge-bathe your child until the fever comes down. To sponge-bathe your child, place him in the bathtub or sink and pour tepid (lukewarm) water over his shoulders and back for 20-30 minutes. Your child may begin to cry and fuss, because his high fever makes the water feel cold and uncomfortable. However, in order for the sponge bathing to be effective, you need to continue it for 20-30 minutes to bring his fever down.

While you are sponge-bathing your child, he may begin to shiver. This is a normal reaction. As long as you are using lukewarm water and not cold water or rubbing alcohol, you are doing exactly what you

should be doing to lower your child's body temperature and reduce his fever. Try to stay calm and continue these measures until your child's temperature comes down.

What medicine should I use for my child's fever?

Unless your child is uncomfortable or has a temperature over 103.0 F, you don't need to treat the fever. If your child is uncomfortable we recommend using either acetaminophen (Tylenol and other brands) or ibuprofen (Advil and other brands). Children should be dosed by weight, if possible. All of these medicines have measuring cups or droppers to dose the product. Beware, the infant drops are **more concentrated** than the children's liquid suspensions. Do not use any other dosing device. Serious overdoses have occurred when the children's dosing cup has been used to give the infant drops to young children.

acetaminophen dosing (Tylenol and other brands)				
may be given every 4 hours as needed				
age	weight (lbs)	Infant Drops (80mg/0.8ml)	Liquid (160mg/tsp)	Chewables (80 mg/tab)
0-4 mos	7-11	1/2 (0.4 ml)	*	*
4-11 mos	12-17	1 (0.8 ml)	1/2	*
12-23 mos	18-23	1 1/2 (1.2 ml)	3/4	*
2-3 yrs	24-35	2 (0.8 ml)	1	2
4-5 yrs	36-47	*	1 1/2	3
6-8 yrs	48-59	*	2	4
9-10 yrs	60-71	*	2 1/2	5
11 and up	72-95	*	3	6

ibuprofen dosing (Advil and others)					
may be given every 6 hours as needed					
age	weight (lbs)	Suspension (100 mg/tsp)	Infant Drops (50 mg/1.25 ml)	Chewables 50 mg	Chewables 100 mg
0-4 mos	7-11	*	0.625 ml	*	*
4-11 mos	12-17	*	1.25 ml	*	*
12-23 mos	18-23	*	1.875 ml	*	*
2-3 yrs	24-35	1	2.5 ml	2	1
4-5 yrs	36-47	1 1/2	*	3	1 1/2
6-8 yrs	48-59	2	*	4	2
9-10 yrs	60-71	2 1/2	*	5	2 1/2
11 and up	72-95	3	*	6	3