We help children and families be their healthiest

Fever

What is a fever?

A fever is the natural reaction of the body to fight an infection. Fevers do not cause any harm. Your child's actual temperature (the number on the thermometer) is not important. How your child looks and behaves is most important. When their temperature is high, children will feel unwell and look tired, but should feel better after the fever is treated. Most fevers in children are caused by virus infections. They are also common after vaccinations.

What about febrile seizures?

Parents are often worried that their child might have a seizure because of fever. Seizures with fever (or febrile seizures) happen in 1 of every 20 children with a fever. These seizures are usually brief and only last a couple of minutes. They don't cause long term problems. Fever medicine does not prevent febrile seizures.

How do I know if my child has a fever?

A temperature of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher means your child has a fever.

How do I take my child's temperature?

You can use a digital or glass thermometer. You can take your child's temperature in the bottom (rectal) or by mouth (oral). Do not take the temperature under the armpit, or use ear thermometers or forehead strips. These methods will not give an accurate temperature.

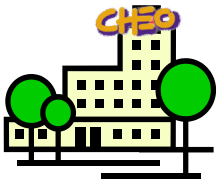
Taking care of a child with a fever at home

- Fever medicine will lower the temperature a little and will make your child more comfortable.
- Give extra fluids. Children need to drink more fluids when they have a fever.
- Repeat the medicine as needed to keep your child comfortable and drinking. Follow medication directions on the next page.
- Fever medicine does not remove all fever, and it won't stop the fever from coming back.
- Fever medicine won't prevent febrile seizures from happening.
- Dress your child lightly in one layer of clothing. Don't wrap your child up in blankets, even if they are shivering.



You'll need to come to the emergency department if your child:

- Is under 3 months and has a fever;
- Is very irritable or sleepy and doesn't improve with fever medicine;
- Has trouble breathing;
- Has signs of dehydration, like: dry mouth, or is not passing urine (peeing) at least ever 8 hours;
- Has a headache or sore neck that does not go away with fever or pain medicine.



You'll need to see your family doctor if your child:

- Has a fever for more than 4 days;
- Is not getting better after 1 week of symptoms;
- Develops an ear ache.

Fever medicines

Ibuprofen and acetaminophen can make your child more comfortable by bringing down the fever a little. Most children will not need to have both of these medications.



When your child has a fever:

- Try ibuprofen first, as it works better for most children.
- If your child does not improve 1 hour after ibuprofen, you can try acetaminophen.
- Use acetaminophen instead of ibuprofen if your child has a fever due to chicken pox.
- Do not use Aspirin® (ASA).

How much should I give?

Medicines for fever and pain come in different concentrations (the number of mg of medicine in each mL, tablet or suppository). Check the concentration on the bottle, and read the package directions carefully.

My child's weight _____

Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)

- ☐ Dose for children 1-6 months: **5mg/kg** as needed every **8 hours**
- ☐ Dose for children over 6 months: **10mg/kg** as needed every **6 hours**

My child's dose:_____ mg



- ☐ Give _____ml of 200mg/5ml infant drops
- ☐ Give _____ml of 100mg/5ml children's liquid
- ☐ Give _____ 100mg chewable tablet(s)
- ☐ Give _____ 200mg tablet(s)
- ☐ Give _____ 400 mg tablet(s)



Acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®)

Dose: **15 mg/kg** every **4 hours** as needed. Do not give more than 5 doses in 24 hours.

My child's dose:_____ mg



- ☐ Give _____ml of 80mg/ml infant drops
- ☐ Give _____ ml of 160mg/5ml children's liquid
- ☐ Give _____ 80 mg chewable tablet(s)
- ☐ Give _____ 160 mg chewable tablet(s)
- ☐ Give _____ 325 mg tablet(s)
- ☐ Give _____ 500 mg tablet(s)



My child received:

- ☐ Ibuprofen at _____ am/pm
- ☐ Acetaminophen at _____ am/pm

Numbers to know

Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000 TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Health Information from Registered Nurses, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

