



Temperature & Fever in Children

Fever is a raised body temperature above the normal daily variation, which usually suggests an underlying infection. **A normal temperature in babies and children** is about 36.4°C, but this can vary slightly from child to child; a **fever is a high** temperature of 38°C or more.

Fever is common and mild fever is a normal part of childhood; a natural, healthy and harmless response to help the body fight infection. Medicines to help manage childhood fever can be purchased from pharmacies and supermarkets without a prescription. Generic non-branded medicines usually offer the best value.

Any child **under six months of age** with a fever should be assessed by a health professional.

Managing a fever and how to treat at home

You can usually look after your child or baby at home and in most cases the temperature should go down over 3 or 4 days. See below advice on how to manage your child's fever at home.

- Give them plenty of fluids and look out for signs of dehydration, give them food if they want it.
- Check on your child regularly in the night; make sure they don't have too many bedclothes.
- Avoid over or under dressing your feverish child.
- It is best to keep feverish children away from nursery whilst the fever persists.
- Give them paracetamol **or** ibuprofen if they are distressed or unwell, to lower their temperature.

Medication

- You can give either paracetamol or ibuprofen if your child is unwell or appears distressed. Neither should be given routinely, just to reduce body temperature or with the aim of preventing fits.
- Do not give your child paracetamol and ibuprofen at the same time unless advised to do so by a health professional. If your child is still distressed before the next dose of one of these medicines is due, you can consider using the other.
- Do not give paracetamol to a child under 2 months unless your GP tells you to.
- Do not give ibuprofen to a child under 3 months or under 5kg unless your GP tells you to or give ibuprofen to children with asthma unless it is known to be safe.
- Do not give your child (under 16 years) aspirin.
- **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for your child's symptoms and follow the instructions supplied with the medicine carefully.

When should I seek advice?

Rarely, more serious medical problems may cause fever in children. Contact NHS 111 or your GP if your child's health gets worse or if you have concerns about looking after your child at home. Also seek medical advice straight away if you notice any of the following:

- Is under 3 months old and has a temperature of 38C or higher, or you think they have a high fever
- Is 3 to 6 months old and has a temperature of 39C or higher, or you think they have a high fever
- Has other signs of illness, such as a rash, as well as a high temperature
- Has a high temperature that's lasted for more than 5 days
- Is not eating or drinking, or is unwell and you're worried
- Has a high temperature that doesn't come down with paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Is showing signs of dehydration – such as nappies that aren't very wet, sunken eyes, and no tears when they're crying

For more information

- Visit your local pharmacy for advice

Be self-care aware

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk