



FEVER

Oh no ~ my child has a fever!

It's going to happen. Everything is going well and then suddenly you realize that your child has a fever. They may not be acting like themselves, they may be cranky and feel warm . . . so what do you do now?

There are several ways that you can take your child's temperature. If your child is an infant under six months of age, we highly recommend taking the temperature rectally. Under the age of four, you can take your child's temperature with a tympanic thermometer, which measures the temperature of the eardrum, or a digital thermometer under the arm. You can also use a temporal thermometer, which measures the temperature of the temporal artery in the forehead. Over the age of four, an oral thermometer, tympanic, or temporal thermometer can be used.

What is a fever? Fever is defined as a temperature of 100.4 or higher. Infants typically have temperatures that are little bit higher than adults, so temperatures of 99 in infants are actually normal.

What do you do when there is a fever? First of all, don't panic. Fever is the body's way of



fighting infection.

It can actually be a good thing because viruses and bacteria can't divide easily at higher temperatures, so the body raises its temperature to help your child fight the infection. Fever is the body's normal response to infection. Fever is not going to hurt your child.

We treat fever because when children are feverish they are uncomfortable. They're less likely to eat and drink when they feel miserable. As physicians, we aren't as concerned about how high the fever is, as much as how the child is acting, what other symptoms he or she has, and how many days the fever has lasted. These are all things we will ask when you call us.

Most illnesses with fever will resolve on their own in a few days. The majority of them are viral. Fever from a virus can typically last for three to five days and will rise and fall every few hours. Typically the fever will be reduced with Tylenol or ibuprofen, only to rise again after the medication wears off. This is not unusual and is no reason for concern. Make sure you are giving your child the proper dose of Tylenol or ibuprofen based on their weight. Our office provides useful charts with this information that you can keep on your refrigerator for easy reference.

When to call the doctor:



- If your child has a fever that lasts longer than three days
- If your child is not drinking well
- If your child is not perking up when the fever is reduced with Tylenol or ibuprofen
- If your child seems unusually uncomfortable, even when the fever is reduced

In these cases, it is best to call us for further advice or to bring your child in for a visit. We can assess your child and decide whether he or she is on the road to recovery or if a little extra treatment is needed.

In most cases, fever is not an emergency and can be managed very easily at home. Of course, if you have any concerns or questions, please always call our office! We are happy to discuss treatment options with you.

Submitted by:

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