

# Fever



Fever is extremely common in children and usually suggests that your child has an infection. Your child has a fever if their temperature is over 38°C. The most accurate way of measuring your child's temperature is with a digital thermometer.

- Viral infections are far more common than bacterial infections.
- Symptoms such as runny nose, cough, wheeze, sore throat, red eyes and diarrhoea are more suggestive of a viral infection than a bacterial infection. If a number of people are unwell in the same household, this also suggests a viral infection (because viral infections are easily spread).
- Viral infections tend to get better on their own and do not need treatment with antibiotics. Antibiotics may actually cause side effects such as rash and diarrhoea and can increase the risk of them developing antibiotic resistance.

## What should you do?

- To make your child more comfortable, you may want to lower their temperature using paracetamol (calpol) and/or ibuprofen. Paracetamol can be given from 2 months of age but read the instructions on the bottle. However, remember that fever is a normal response that may help the body to fight infection and paracetamol/ibuprofen will not get rid of it entirely.
- Avoid tepid sponging your child – it doesn't actually reduce your child's temperature and may cause your child to shiver.
- Encourage them to drink plenty of fluids.

## How long will my child's symptoms last?

- Fever caused by a viral infection tends to improve within 2 to 3 days
- If your child's fever lasts for more than 5 days, get them seen by your GP.

## When should you worry?

### RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Becomes pale, mottled and feels abnormally cold to touch
- Is going blue around the lips
- Becomes difficult to rouse
- Develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure
- Has a fit, or is fretful or irritable when touched

**You need urgent help go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999**

### AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Is finding it hard to breath
- Seems dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, drowsy or passing less urine than usual)
- Is under 3 months of age with a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F or 3-6 months of age with a temperature above 39°C / 102.2°F (but fever is common in babies up to 2 days after they receive vaccinations)
- Is not improving after 5 days
- Is getting worse or if you are worried

**You need to contact a doctor or nurse today**  
Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111

### GREEN

If none of the above features are present

**Self Care - You can look after your child at home**

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