

fever

WHAT IS FEVER?

Fever is body temperature above normal. It is the body's normal response to infection and may last 2 to 3 days. Fever may also result from illness, infection, immunization, from being overheated or dehydrated (losing body fluids), or a lot of crying.

	NORMAL TEMP.	FEVER
Axilla (armpit)	36.4°C (97.5°F)	38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher
Oral (under the tongue)	37.0°C (98.6°F)	38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher
Tympanic (in the ear)	37.0°C (98.6°F)	38.0°C (100.4°F) or higher
Rectal (bum)	37.5°C (99.5°F)	38.5°C (101.3°F) or higher

Take your child's temperature before seeking medical help. Always report how the temperatures was taken.

WHEN SHOULD I TREAT A FEVER?

Fever is rarely harmful to your child. The degree (or height) of the fever does not tell you how sick your child is. When your child feels warm or feverish, it is important to watch his/her behaviour closely. It is not always necessary to bring the temperature right back to normal. However, lowering the temperature will help your child feel better and be less irritable (cranky). You may allow it to run its course unless your child has previous had convulsions (seizures or fits) with fever.

HOW CAN I TREAT A FEVER?

- Keep your child cool
- Have your child wear only light weight clothing.
- Keep the room temperature between 20° - 21°C (68° - 70°F).
- Offer your child cool, clear fluids (ice water, clear juices, pop-sicles) every hour when awake. Your child may not want to eat solid food.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™, Panadol™) or ibuprofen (Advil™, Motrin™) to help your child feel more comfortable. Follow directions on the bottle, or those given by your doctor, for the right dose and how often you may repeat it. DO NOT use both at the same time or overlap dosages of the medications.

SAFETY TIPS

- Keep medicine in a child resistant container and locked up
- Do not give products that contain aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid, ASA) as they can increase the risk of Reyes Syndrome, a serious condition that can damage the liver and brain.

DO NOT

- Put your child in front of a fan or air conditioner.
- Let your child shiver (this may raise temperature, or
- Wake your child to check the temperature unless he/she has been sleeping for an unusually long time.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY DOCTOR?

Contact your doctor or go to the nearest emergency department if your child has any of the following:

- Fever for more than 48 hours
- Fever higher than 39°C (102°F)
- Fever and a rash
- Fever and is less than 6 months of age.
- Fever with a seizure (convulsion or fit).
- Other signs of illness such as:
- Much crying irritability, fussiness, or confusion
- A stiff neck
- Coughing, fast breathing, or wheezing (whistling sound when breathing)
- Being hard to waken, unusually quiet, or unresponsive.
- Diarrhea and vomiting.

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fever (continued)

WHAT TYPES OF THERMOMETERS CAN I USE?

Carefully follow instructions that come with the thermometers.

Digital

There are three types of digital thermometers:

- Oral (mouth or armpit)
- Rectal (bum)
- Tympanic (ear)

A digital thermometer has several advantages:

- It is unbreakable.
- It is faster.
- The temperature is displayed in numbers. It beeps when it reaches your child's temperature

Glass

There are two types of mercury glass thermometers:

- Oral (mouth or armpit)
- Rectal (bum)

Before use, shake the thermometer until the mercury line is below 25°C (95°F). To read: after the thermometer has been in place for at least 3 minutes, turn it until you see the line of mercury. Read the number at the end of the line of mercury. To care for: clean the thermometer with cool, soapy water, rinse and wipe dry. Wipe again using a bleach or antiseptic solution. Rinse again with cool water and wipe dry. Store away from heat in a container in which it will not break.

SAFETY TIPS

- The use of glass thermometers is not recommended – they may contain mercury, a toxic substance
- Do not use glass thermometers for young children because they may break and hurt the child.

HOW DO I TAKE A TEMPERATURE?

It is important to take your child's temperature safely and accu-

rately. A fever strip should not be used as it may not be accurate.

Axilla (armpit)

- This is the safest way for children under 4 years of age.
- Remove the child's shirt and dry the armpit area.
- Place the bulb end of the thermometer high into the armpit.
- Hold in place with the child's arm across his/her chest for at least 3 minutes (for glass) or until digital thermometer beeps.

Oral (under the tongue)

- Use this way for cooperative children 4 years of age or older.
- Do not give foods or liquids by mouth for 10 minutes before taking the temperature.
- Place the tip of the thermometer under the tongue.
- Tell your child to close his/her mouth gently, not to bite on the thermometer, and not to talk while the thermometer is in place.
- Hold the thermometer in place for at least 3 minutes (for glass), or until the digital thermometer beeps.

Tympanic (in the ear)

- Proper ear placement is very important. Carefully follow the instructions that come with the thermometer.
- Gently pull back the ear lobe to straighten the ear canal.
- Place the tympanic thermometer at the entrance of the ear canal.

Rectal (bum)

- Use this way only if your doctor asks you to and show you how.

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