



# Fever

## Part of the body's natural response

If your child has a fever, he or she will have a body temperature above 37.5°C. Your child may also feel tired, look pale, have a poor appetite, be irritable, have a headache or other aches and pains and feel generally unwell. Take the temperature from the armpit (don't use in the mouth of under 5s). However, bear in mind that these measurements are less accurate as the armpit is slightly cooler.

A fever is part of the body's natural response to fight infection and can often be left to run its course provided your child is drinking enough and is otherwise well. If your child is having trouble drinking, trying to reduce their temperature may help with this. This is important in preventing your child from becoming dehydrated. As a guide, your child's urine should be pale yellow - if it is darker, your child may need to drink more.

Fevers are common in young children. They are usually caused by viral infections and clear up without treatment. However, a fever can occasionally be a sign of a more serious illness such as a severe bacterial infection of the blood (septicaemia), urinary tract infection, pneumonia, measles, meningitis or other contagious disease. If your child has a fever and a rash, contact your GP.

**You should also contact your GP if fever symptoms are not improving after 48 hours.**

Always seek medical advice if your child develops a fever soon after an operation, or soon after travelling abroad.

### 1.

My toddler is hot and grumpy.

### 2.

Have you tried infant **sugar-free** paracetamol? Have you made sure they are drinking lots of fluids?

### 3.

If their temperature remains over 37.5°C and doesn't come down, contact your GP.

## GP says

When looking after a feverish child at home you should:

- Get the child to drink more (where a baby or child is breastfed the most appropriate fluid is breast milk).
- Look for signs of dehydration: reduced wet nappies, dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, poor overall appearance, sunken soft spot on baby's head.
- Know how to spot the signs of meningitis (see page 26).
- Check child during the night.

Source: NICE, Feverish illness in children/ 2013

## Over 37.5°C means a fever

### **Babies under six months:**

Always contact your GP, health visitor, practice nurse, nurse practitioner or local clinic GP if your baby has other signs of illness, as well as a raised temperature and/or if your baby's temperature is **37.5°C (99.5°F)** or higher.

### **Older children:**

A little fever isn't usually a worry. Contact your GP if your child seems unusually ill, or has a high temperature which doesn't come down.

It's important to encourage your child to drink as much fluid as possible. Water is best.

### **To help reduce temperature:**

- Undress to nappy/pants.
- Keep room at comfortable temp (18°C).
- Encourage your child to drink more (even little amounts often).
- Give **sugar-free** paracetamol or ibuprofen in the correct recommended dose for your child (see page 6 for usage advice).

Source: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)