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FEVER

Definition

A fever means the body temperature is above normal. Your child has a fever if:

- Rectal, Ear or Temporal Artery temperature is 100.4 F (38.0 C) or higher
- Pacifier or Oral temperature is 100 F (37.8 C) or higher
- Under the arm (axillary) temperature is 99 F (37.2 C) or higher

Causes

- Main cause: colds and other viral infections. Teething does not cause fever
- Fever may be the only symptom for the first 24 hours. Other symptoms (runny nose, cough, diarrhea, etc.) often start later. Until they do, it's hard to know what your child has.

How to Treat a Fever

1. Reassurance: The presence of a fever means your child has an infection. Most fevers are good for sick children because they help the body fight the infection.

2. Treatment for All Fevers: Extra Fluids and Less Clothing

- Have your child drink lots of cold fluids
- Dress your child in 1 layer of light weight clothing

3. Fever Medicine for Fevers Over 102 F:

- Fever medicines only need to be used if the fever is causing discomfort. That usually means fevers above 102 F (39 C).
- Give acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g., Advil). Give the correct dosage.
- The goal of fever therapy is to bring the temperature down 1 or 2 degrees to a comfortable level.
- Avoid using acetaminophen and ibuprofen together. Also never give aspirin

4. Return to School: Your child can return to day care or school after the fever is gone and your child feels well enough to play or learn.

5. Expected Course: Fevers associated with viral illnesses normally last for 2 or 3 days.

Call Your Doctor Now (night or day) If

- Your child looks or acts very sick.
- Your child is less than 3 months old
- Fever is over 104 F (40 C).

Call Your Doctor During the Day If

- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child is between 3 months and 2 years old
- Fever lasts more than 3 days