



Children's Health

Fevers

TIPS TO RELIEVE THEM



Fever can be a symptom of illness or infection. Fever is also a temporary effect of exercise, hot weather or immunizations. Normal body temperature ranges from 97° F to 100° F. If your child has a fever of 100° F orally or by ear, 101° F rectally or 99° F under the armpit, she probably has a fever. Children tend to run higher fevers than adults.

CONVULSIONS

When a temperature rises rapidly, convulsions can occur. During convulsions the body stiffens, and arms, legs and teeth clench together. The eyes may roll back and the child may also stop breathing for a few seconds, vomit, urinate or pass stool. Convulsions last from one to five minutes. Although very frightening, fever convulsions in children 6 months to 4 years are seldom serious. Have your child seen by a doctor immediately to be sure.

WHEN TO TREAT

For a low fever that seems to cause little discomfort, no treatment may be required. A fever itself is one way the child's body fights an infection. Your doctor may recommend not treating a fever for 24 hours. If the fever is high enough to interfere with drinking, eating, sleeping or normal activities, it should probably be treated.

CALL THE DOCTOR IF...

a child under 6 months old has a fever.

the fever is accompanied by seizures, chills, listlessness, abnormal breathing, stiff neck, excessive irritability, confusion, hallucinations or an inability to be comforted.

the fever accompanies ear pain, vomiting and/or diarrhea, urinary pain or purple spots on the skin.

your child has recently had surgery or a chronic illness, such as kidney disease, cancer or diabetes or has a history of seizures from fever.

there are signs of dehydration (sunken eyes or soft spot, doughy skin, intense thirst, little or no urine output, dark yellow urine, rapid heartbeat and lethargy).

a fever of 104° F does not come down within four to six hours of home treatment.

a fever has lasted more than three days.

HOME TREATMENT

- Make sure your child drinks plenty of liquids and gets plenty of rest.
- For fevers over 104° F, place your child in a bath filled with tepid water. Gently sponge the water over your child's body for 15 minutes. If your child begins to shiver or protest the bath is too cold, remove him immediately.
- Avoid giving your child a shower during a high fever, as it may increase the fever.
- Give your child an appropriate dose of acetaminophen up to every four hours.

Caution:

- Don't use rubbing alcohol or cold water to cool the body down.
- Don't give your child aspirin or any medication containing salicylates.