

## Contact your doctor's office if your child is:

- Very irritable
- Not drinking or urinating
- Looking and acting very sick or seems confused
- Feverish for longer than 3 days
- Having difficulty breathing
- Unable to swallow
- Very sleepy and hard to wake up
- Or if you have any concerns

## What is fever?

Fever is the body's normal way of fighting infection. Fever lets us know that something is going on and alerts us to keep an extra watch on how a child is acting. Normal temperature variation throughout the day is between 97 degrees and 100.4 degrees F. Your child has a fever if his or her temperature is greater than 38.5 C or 100.4 F with a rectal or ear thermometer. The best way to take a temperature of a child under 3 years of age is rectally. Using a digital thermometer is the quickest and safest. Mercury glass thermometers are NO LONGER recommended. Taking a temperature under the arm, with a forehead strip or with a pacifier thermometer is unreliable and NOT recommended.

## Putting the fever in perspective

Fevers between 100.5 and 105 F are common with many illnesses in children. The height of the fever does not necessarily correlate with severity of illness. We treat children with fever reducing medication to make them more comfortable. Do not wake your child just to take a temperature or to give fever reducing medication. Fevers are generally not dangerous until they are over 107-108 F. Children under 3 months of age with a temperature over 100.4 F should see a doctor.

## What to do?

If you think your child has a fever, dress him/her lightly and encourage fluid intake. Avoid bundling your child in heavy blankets.

**SPONGE AND COOL BATHS ARE USUALLY NOT NEEDED AND MAY MAKE YOUR CHILD MORE UNCOMFORTABLE. ALCOHOL BATHS OR RUBS ARE DEFINITELY NOT RECOMMENDED AND MAY BE HARMFUL.**

If you choose to use a fever reducing medication, we recommend either acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil). We do not recommend alternating these medications or giving them at the same time. These medications will reduce the temperature 1-2 degrees and last several hours. Reducing a temperature to normal is not necessary, because a little fever can be beneficial in helping your child fight infection.

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