



WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A FEVER

It happens to all parents. We wake up to our child crying. When we check on the child and he/she feels hot to the touch. We know it's a fever but we don't know why. A fever is a good sign that the body is trying to heal itself. It is fighting an illness or infection.

What is the definition of a fever?

A fever is a body temperature that is higher than normal. Normal range is between 97.5 F and 100.3 F. A temperature of 100.4 F or higher is a fever.

What's the best way to find out if my child has a fever?

Most people now use a digital thermometer. If your child is younger than 1 year, take a rectal temperature to get the most accurate reading. Label the thermometer "oral" or "rectal". Don't use the same thermometer in both places. Glass thermometers are also safe and no longer contain mercury. They are tougher to read, but do not need batteries. If you learn to use one, the thermometer will not be "dead" on that rare late night time that you need it.

When should I call the doctor?

Pay attention to signs and symptoms of a serious illness. Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fever and:

- Is younger than 3 months with a fever of 100.4 F or higher
- Looks very sick, is unusually sleepy, or very fussy
- Has a seizure
- Has been in a very hot place such as a hot car
- Has other symptoms such as a stiff neck, bad headache, severe sore throat, bad earache, a rash, or repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Has immune system problems, such as cancer or sickle cell disease
- Fever goes higher than 104 F repeatedly
- Your child acts sick even after the fever comes down
- The fever lasts more than 2 days in a child younger than 2 years old
- The fever lasts more than 3 days in a child older than 2 years old

How should I treat my child's fever?

- Encourage child to drink fluids.
- Keep room temperature comfortably cool.
- Dress the child in light clothing.
- Don't allow the child to do heavy activity.
- Talk with the child's doctor about medicine if child is uncomfortable.