



Ticket to Healthy Living

FEVER



Texas
Children's
Health Plan is
your family's
ticket to
health care.



What is a fever?

Fever is when your child's body temperature is over 99 to 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit (F) by mouth (oral) or 100 to 100.5 degrees F by rectum. A fever is a sign of your child being sick. All children get fevers. Children can have a fever after getting some of their immunizations (shots) and this is normal. The normal temperature of most children is around 98.6 degrees F (oral). The only way to tell if your child has a fever is to take your child's temperature either by mouth or by rectum. Take your child's temperature when he or she is well. Do this so that you know your child's normal temperature.

What causes fever?

Fever can be caused by many things, including a viral or bacterial infection or a reaction to a shot. A fever is part of your child's body defense system to fight off sickness. Most fevers last between two to three days.

Signs you might see

- A baby may be extra fussy.
- Your child's skin may be hot.
- Your child may sweat.
- Your child's face may be red.
- Your child may have a headache.
- Your child may have the chills.
- Your child's breathing and heart may be fast.

What to do

- There are times where you don't want to treat a fever, because it is the way your child's body is fighting off the infection. Consult your doctor for the right action.
- You can give your child more fluids to drink. They help cool down your child's body.
- You also can give your child popsicles or cold treats to help get the fever down and make your child more comfortable.
- Dress your child in light clothes or just a diaper. Heavy clothes can make the fever worse.
- You can give your child a bath with lukewarm water.
- Try to keep the room cool – use a fan and turn down the heat.
- Be sure to check your child's temperature every four hours during the day.
- If your child is fussy, not eating and drinking, or the fever is over 101 degrees F (oral) you can give your child Tylenol every four to six hours. Be sure to read the label to find out how much Tylenol to give, or ask your doctor or nurse. Do not give your baby any medicine for fever – consult your doctor about what to do.
- Do not give aspirin to anyone younger than 21 years. Aspirin can make a child very sick.
- Take off warm, tight clothes and socks to lower the fever.
- Put a cold, wet cloth on your child's forehead and neck.
- Sponge your child with lukewarm water, while lying on the bed.
- Stop sponging and cover your child lightly if he or she starts to shiver.



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When to call your doctor

- Your baby is younger than 2 months and has a fever of 100.2 degrees F (rectal) or higher.
- Your baby is between 2 and 6 months old and has a fever of 101 degrees F (rectal) or higher.
- Your baby's soft spot on the head is bulging or sunken.
- Your child is older than 6 months and has a fever of 104 degrees F (rectal) or higher.
- Your child has a seizure (convulsion).
- Your child throws up (vomits) or has stomach pain.
- Your child cries if touched or moved and cannot be comforted.
- Your child has a stiff neck.
- Your child has a hard time breathing.
- Your child has a bad cough, white patches on the throat, burning urine (pee), or ear pain.
- Your child has signs of a skin infection (pain or redness).
- Your child has a skin rash.
- It is hard to wake your child up.

What happens if your child has a seizure?

- When a fever is high enough, a child can have a seizure.
- You need to call your doctor as soon as possible when your child has a seizure.
- Do not try to stop arms and legs from moving. Instead, move things out of the way so your child does not hit them and hurt himself.
- Be sure not to put anything in your child's mouth. Turn your child on his side so he does not choke on vomit.
- Call 911 if your child is having trouble breathing or turns blue. Also, call 911 if the seizure lasts more than two to three minutes.
- Do not put your child in the tub during a seizure.

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