

# When your child has a fever/temperature

An information guide



# When your child has a fever/temperature

## Fever/Temperature in Children:

This leaflet contains discharge advice following your attendance to the Accident & Emergency Department (A&E).

A high temperature in a child can also be referred to as a fever. Fever in a child is a temperature of 38°C or over. Fever is common in children and often clears up without any treatment. It is appreciated that it can be worrying at times when children's temperatures are high.

A normal temperature in babies and children is around 36.4°C.

Remember this can vary slightly from child to child.

Fever/temperature in the human body is its first natural defense mechanism. This is how the body fights viral/bacterial infections, such as coughs and colds.

## Other conditions that can cause fever:

- Upper respiratory tract infections (RTIs).
- Flu.
- Ear infections.
- Roseola – a virus that can cause a temperature and a rash.
- Tonsillitis.
- Kidney or urinary tract infections (UTIs).
- Common childhood illnesses, such as chickenpox and whooping cough.

## How to assess if your child is unwell:

It is unlikely your child is seriously unwell if they are:

- A normal colour.
- Eating and drinking.
- Breathing normally.
- Active.
- Alert, smiling and responsive.

It can be difficult to tell sometimes when a child is seriously unwell. As a parent/guardian you know your child, but the main point is **TRUST** your instincts.

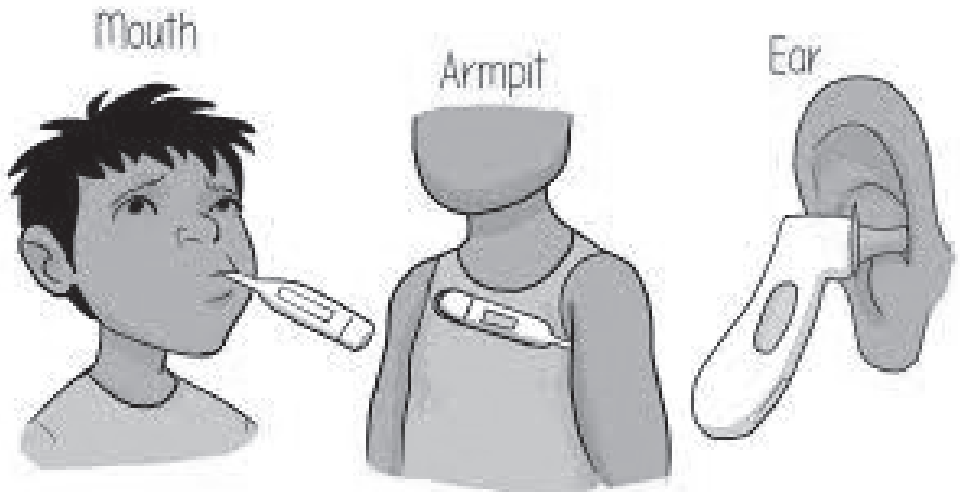
**Checking for a high temperature:** Observe your child

- Feel your child's skin are they hotter than normal.
- Do they have red cheeks.
- Are they sweaty or clammy.
- More clingy than normal.

### **CHECK THEIR TEMPERATURE**

Use a digital thermometer where possible.

These you can buy from a chemist/pharmacist, they don't need to be expensive but please consult the instructions carefully before using.



## **When to get urgent medical advice**

### **Contact your GP urgently, if your child:**

- Is under three months old and has a temperature of 38°C or above.
- Is between three and six months old and has a temperature of 39°C or above.

You should also see your GP if your child has other signs of being unwell, such as:

- Persistent vomiting.
- Refusal to feed.
- Showing signs of dehydration - reduced wet nappies or reduced urine output.
- Temperature has lasted more than 5 days.
- Temperature does not come down with paracetamol or ibuprofen.

If it isn't possible to contact your GP, call the GP out of hour's service.

If your child seems to be otherwise well, for example, if they're playing and attentive, it's less likely they're seriously ill.

### **Things you can do to help:**

- Give them plenty of fluids.
- Look out for signs of dehydration - Sunken eyes, dry mouth, absence of tears.
- Give them food if they want it.
- Check on your child regularly during the night.
- Keep them at home.
- Give them paracetamol or ibuprofen if they're distressed or unwell, always follow the manufacturers instruction.
- Get medical advice if you're worried about your child.

## **Things NOT to do:**

- Do not undress your child or sponge them down to cool them as this may make them feel more uncomfortable – fever is a natural and healthy response to infection.
- Do not cover them up in too many clothes or bedclothes.
- Do not give aspirin to under 16s.
- Do not give ibuprofen and paracetamol at the same time, unless a GP tells you to.
- Do not give paracetamol to a child under 2 months, unless advised by a Doctor.
- Do not give ibuprofen to a child under 3 months or under 5kg, unless advised by a Doctor.
- Do not give ibuprofen to children with asthma unless otherwise advised by your GP.

## **Call 999 or go to A&E if your child:**

- Has a stiff neck.
- Has a non-blanching rash - one that does not fade when you press a glass against it.
- Is bothered by light.
- Has a fit (febrile seizure) for the first time (they are unresponsive and cannot stop shaking).
- Has unusually cold hands and feet.
- Has pale, blotchy, blue or grey skin.
- Has a weak, high-pitched cry that's not like their normal cry.
- Is drowsy, floppy or hard to wake.
- Finds it hard to breathe and sucks their stomach in under their ribs.
- Has a soft spot on their head that curves outwards or sinks inwards (bulging/sunken fontanelle).

**If you are at all concerned about your child's health please contact your GP or attend your local Accident & Emergency department for further assessment.**



**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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