

Fever in children

An information guide



Fever in children

What is a fever?

A fever is an increase in your child's body temperature (over 37.5 Celcius).

Your child may appear flushed or feel warm to the touch. They often feel generally unwell, miserable and tired.

What causes a fever?

A fever is a sign of infection in the body.

Viruses such as colds, flu and diarrhoea are the common cause. Less commonly, a fever can be caused by bacterial infection (e.g. pneumonia, urine and kidney infections), after immunisations, or rarely, after foreign travel. A fever is a way for the body to fight infection and is not itself harmful.

Almost all children recover quickly with no problems.

How can I help my child at home?

- Allow your child to lose heat through their skin by keeping them lightly dressed. Do not wrap them up, even if they complain of feeling cold. The aim is to prevent overheating or shivering
- Keep the room well ventilated. Opening the window, or using a fan on the other side of the room, to keep the air circulating, may be useful. Do not place the fan directly blowing onto your child
- Do not tepid sponge or bathe your child. This used to be popular but is now not advised
- Give your child regular drinks but do not worry if they do not want to eat
- Continue breastfeeding
- If your child seems miserable or uncomfortable give paracetamol liquid (following the instructions on the bottle). This is not necessary if your child is comfortable and not distressed by the fever
- Check on your child 2 – 3 times a night to check they are not getting worse.

Most fevers are not serious and most children will get better on their own. However, a fever can be an indication of a serious infection.

Seek immediate medical attention if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Complaining of a stiff neck or light hurting their eyes
- Vomiting or refusing to drink much
- He or she is passing less urine than usual, and has signs of dehydration (dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes and sunken soft spot in babies)
- Your child has a rash, especially if it does not disappear when pressed
- Sleepier, more lethargic, or floppier than usual
- Your child has breathing problems
- He or she appears to be in pain
- Your child complains of a headache and has an unusual or high pitched cry
- The fever and pain has not responded to paracetamol treatment
- Your child has a fit
- If your child is under three months old and has a fever
- The fever has lasted more than 48 hours
- You are concerned about anything.

Most children with a fever do get better very quickly. Please ring your GP, community nurse, or Health Visitor, or attend a walk in centre if you are at all concerned.

Contact details:

The Royal Oldham Hospital:

Childrens Ward - Telephone: 0161 627 8866

North Manchester General Hospital:

Childrens Ward - Telephone: 0161 625 8273

Fairfield General Hospital :

Paediatric Observation & Assessment, Ward 4 - Telephone: 0161 778 2511

Useful telephone numbers

NHS 111 – emergency and urgent care service

You may wish to record other useful telephone numbers below:

GP –

Health visitor –

Community children's nursing team –

BARDOC/Go to doc –

Notes:

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 advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

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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