



What is a fever?

The normal body temperature is 37° Centigrade (C) or 98.6° Fahrenheit (F). Your child's normal temperature may be a degree higher or lower than this. Body temperature is highest in the late afternoon or early evening. It is lowest in the early morning. You should take your child's temperature when your child is well so that you will know the normal temperature for your child. A fever is any temperature over normal. Your child's fever may or may not need to be treated.

How do I measure my child's temperature?

You can choose either a glass, digital (number readout), strip or ear thermometer. A digital thermometer is safer and more accurate than a glass thermometer for use in both the mouth and rectum. A thermometer strip for the forehead is not very accurate and should not be used. The ear thermometer is safe and easy to use. It is not accurate in very young children (less than three months).

Where do I measure my child's temperature?

Your child's temperature can be taken in the mouth (oral), arm pit (axillary), ear (tympanic), or rectum (rectal). Rectal temperatures are most accurate. In children older than three months, ear temperatures are also accurate. Discuss with your doctor the best way for you to measure your child's temperature. In the doctor's office, if your child shows fever by the ear or arm pit measurement, a rectal temperature may be needed for recheck.

When should I take my child's temperature?

High or low temperature is one sign that your child is either sick or reacting to normal changes (cutting teeth, immunization, environment too warm/cold). Infection is the most common cause for high or low temperature. The infection could be caused by bacteria or viruses and may need to be treated with antibiotics. You should take your child's temperature when your child:

- does not look or feel well
- has skin that is hot to the touch
- is breathing faster or slower than usual
- has a runny nose or cough
- has a lump that feels warm
- is rubbing or pulling at his/her ears
- is throwing up or having diarrhea
- is sleepier than usual

What should I do if my child has a fever?

- Take your child's temperature. Write down the temperature and the time you took it. Keep this record to show your doctor. Tell your doctor how you took the temperature (armpit, mouth, ear or rectum).
- Keep your house just warm enough to keep your child from chilling.
- Do not let your child play or sleep in drafty areas.
- Keep your child lightly clothed. Do not use heavy covers.
- Do not let your child shiver, Shivering is the body's way to increase heat. Very young babies cannot shiver. They mottle (the skin has splotches of color or white) when they are cold or sick.
- Give clear liquids as often as your child will drink them. Clear liquids are those you can see through such as juices, gelatin, flavored drinks, or water. Fluids will help prevent dehydration in your child.
- If your child's temperature is over 40° C or 104° F, give acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Wait for 30 minutes to see if the temperature has come down. If the temperature remains high, do lukewarm sponging. Sponge lukewarm water over your child's front and back for

about 30 minutes. Do not use cold water or alcohol. Stop sponging if your child begins to shiver. Gently pat your child dry. Do not rub dry as this adds heat.

What medicine can I use to treat my child's fever?

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra, Panadol) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) are medicines that relieve pain and lower fever. They come in different forms:

drops, liquid, elixir, syrup, chewable tablets, and caplets. The kind and amount needed to treat fever depends on your child's age and weight. If you have questions about the right dose for your child, ask your family doctor. (See dosage guide)

What are warning signs to tell my child's doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if your child:

- Is less than three months old and has a temperature below 36° C (98.6° F) or above 38.5° C (101.5° F)
- has fever over 40.6° C (105° F)
- is difficult to awaken
- is crying and does not stop even when held or comforted
- has a stiff neck
- has any purple spots on the skin
- has a hard time breathing and gets no better after you clear the nose.
- is unable to swallow anything and is drooling saliva
- has constant vomiting or diarrhea
- looks and acts very sick (recheck appearance one hour after giving acetaminophen)

REMEMBER...

Your child may be ill and have no fever. Your child may have a fever that does not need to be treated. If your child looks or acts sick, you should take your child's temperature, and talk with your doctor about treatment.

Acetaminophen Dosage Guide		
Age/Weight	Drops/Syrup	80 mg Chewables
Under 4 mos or Under 12 lbs	½ dropper or 1/2 tsp	
4 to 11 mos or 12-11 lbs	1 dropper or ½ tsp	
12 to 23 mos or 18-23 lbs	1 1/2 dropper or 3/4 tsp	
2 to 3 yrs or 24-35 lbs	2 droppers or 1 tsp	2 tablets
4 to 5 yrs or 36-47 lbs	3 droppers or 1 1/2 tsp	3 tablets
6 to 8yrs or 48-59 lbs	2 tsp	4tablets
9 to 10 yrs or 60-71 lbs	2.5 tsp	5 tablets
11 yrs or 72-95 lbs	3 tsp	6 tablets
12 yrs or 98 lbs	4 tsp	8 tablets
Dose may be given every 4 hours as needed. Do not give more than 5 doses in 24 hours. Use only the dropper or dosing cup that comes with the medicine.		
Ibuprofen Liquid Dosage Guide		
Age/Weight	Fever less than 102.5 F.	Fever greater than 102.5 F.
6 to 11 mos or Under 17 lbs	1/4 tsp	1/2 tsp
12 to 23 mos or 10-23 lbs	1/2 tsp	1 tsp
2 to 3 yrs or 24-35 lbs	3/4 tsp	1 1/2tsp
4 to 5 yrs or 36-47 lbs	1 tsp	2 tsp
6 to 8 yrs or 48-59 lbs	1 1/4tsp	2 1/2 tsp
9 to 10 yrs or 60-71 lbs	1 1/2tsp	3 tsp
11 to 12 yrs or 72-95 lbs	2tsp	4 tsp
Dose may be given every 6 to 8 hours as needed. Do not give more than 4 doses in 24 hours. Use only the dropper or dosing cup that comes with the medicine.		