

## **Fever**

Fever isn't an illness or an enemy. It is a healthy response to an infection. When the body is invaded by a virus, bacteria, or fungus, white blood cells and the brain team up to turn up the body's thermostat, which helps the immune system fight off the infection. The flushed cheeks and the sweating that often accompany a fever are the body's way of getting rid of excess heat. Although the fever-producing illness may be of concern, the fever itself, unless it exceeds 106.0 degrees will not cause any harm.

A high fever doesn't necessarily mean a sicker child. Fevers of 105.0 degrees can be produced by even minor viruses. Every child reacts differently when sick - some only get warm with a serious illness while others will be very hot even with a slight infection. More importantly, you should monitor your child's behavior. If your child has a fever of 104 degrees, but remains active and responsive and can be comforted, then you have less reason to be concerned than if your child has a fever of 102 degrees and she is lethargic and unresponsive or cries inconsolably.

Every child has his or her own body temperature - a well-child can have a temperature anywhere from 97 to 100 degrees and it may vary during the day. The 98.6 degree "normal" is an average temperature and not what is expected of every child.

### **HOW TO TAKE A TEMPERATURE**

We do not recommend ear thermometers. We have found this method to be unreliable in children. For children under age five, we recommend rectal or axillary temperatures be checked with a digital thermometer.

**DO NOT ADD OR SUBTRACT A DEGREE FROM ANY TEMPERATURE, SIMPLY REPORT HOW YOU TOOK THE TEMPERATURE.**

#### **RECTAL**

- Coat the bulb of the thermometer with a lubricant such as KY jelly
- Lay the baby on his tummy over your lap or a flat surface.
- Slowly insert the thermometer a half an inch into the rectum
- Hold it in place until the electronic thermometer beeps
- Check the reading

#### **AXILLARY**

1. Gently place the thermometer well into the center of the child's dry armpit.
2. Keep the thermometer in place by holding the child's elbow against his side until it beeps.
3. Check the reading

## **ORAL**

- Follow the manufacturer's instruction for cleaning your digital thermometer
- Have the child hold the thermometer under their tongue using their lips, not their teeth.
- Keep the thermometer in their mouth until it beeps, then remove and read

## **HOW TO REDUCE A FEVER**

- Give fluids
- Give fever medicine such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
- Keep the child cool: dress in light clothing, keep the room cool, and use just a sheet or light blanket. **DO NOT BUNDLE YOUR CHILD UP TO INDUCE SWEATING.**
- Sponge your child down. Sponging and allowing the water to evaporate from the skin will decrease the body temperature just as natural sweating does. **DO NOT USE ALCOHOL TO SPONGE, THIS CAN AGGREGATE THE FEVER AND HARM THE CHILD.**

## **WHEN TO CALL OUR OFFICE**

- Your infant of 4 months or less has a temperature higher than 100.4 degrees
- Your infant of 4 to 6 months has a temperature of 101 degrees or higher
- Your child has a temperature of 103.0 degrees or higher
- A fever lasts more than 48 hours
- Regardless of age or the degree of fever, if your child is lethargic, pale, or doesn't respond to fever-reducing measures.
- Symptoms of stiff neck, ear pain, severe coughing, or painful urination occur.