

Fever in Children:

What parents should know



Most children will get a fever. Parents need to know how to respond.



What is a fever?

A fever happens when the body is fighting an infection or sickness. The body heats up, making it a less comfortable place for germs to spread.

Some symptoms of a fever

- Sweating
- Shivering
- Dizziness
- Body aches/ Headaches
- Feeling tired and weak

Take your child's temperature

Read and follow the instructions that come with your thermometer.

- **FOREHEAD:** Temporal artery thermometers can be used on children of any age.
- **EAR:** Tympanic thermometers can be used on children at least 6 months old.
- **ORAL:** Take temperature by mouth once a child is 4 years old.
- **RECTAL:** This offers the best temperature readings, especially for infants under 3 months.

Do not use a mercury thermometer. If it breaks, it can be poisonous.



Help your child feel better

- Keep them hydrated.
- Keep their room cool.
- Dress them in light clothing and use a light blanket.
- Make sure they get rest.
- Try acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Be sure to use the correct dose. Do not use aspirin.
- Call their doctor for help.

Infants under 3 months should not take any medicine without checking with a doctor first.

Call your doctor if:

- Your child is younger than 3 months old with a temperature of 100.4° F or higher.
- Your child is 3 to 36 months old with a temperature of 100.4° F or higher for more than 72 hours.
- Your child's fever rises above 103° F, no matter what age.
- Your child has a fever that is on and off for a week, no matter what age.

Seek medical care right away if your child has a fever and:

- Trouble breathing
- Seizures
- A rash or purple spots
- Vomiting, diarrhea
- Severe headache or stomach pain

Get advice from a nurse

If you need help, you're not alone. Call our 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line at 1-888-244-4347 or 711 for TTY users.



Call Member Services: 1-800-440-4347
Monday–Friday, 7 a.m.–7 p.m.,
and Saturday–Sunday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.
TTY users should call 1-800-718-4347.

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