

Fever in Children



Pre-reading

Questions: Why do fevers happen? When are fevers a concern?

What do you do when you or your child has a fever?

Definitions: Immunization – a vaccination to protect against sickness or disease that is typically administered through an injection

Lukewarm – slightly warm, not cold or hot

Seizure – an attack caused by an illness or condition that often makes the body convulse or shake

Reading

15 When the body temperature rises above normal, a fever occurs. Fevers fight off infection in
34 the body. Most fevers are not harmful, but can last 2 to 3 days. Children get fevers more often
50 than adults. Sometimes children can get a fever following an immunization, but this is usually not
54 a cause for worry.

54 Thermometers measure fevers. A thermometer can be purchased anywhere there is a
66 pharmacy. The body's temperature is different depending on when and how you measure it.
80 Normal body temperature is 98.6° Fahrenheit (37.0° Celsius) when taken by mouth. A fever is
97 present if:

- 99 • The rectal (butt opening) temperature is over 100.4° Fahrenheit (38.0° Celsius)
- 112 • The oral (by mouth) temperature is over 99.5° Fahrenheit (37.5° Celsius)
- 125 • The armpit temperature is over 99.0° Fahrenheit (37.2° Celsius)
- 136 • The ear temperature is over 100.4° Fahrenheit (38.0° Celsius)

147 There are different things that can be done to take care of a fever. Since fevers work in the
166 body to fight off infection, medicine should only be given if needed. For example, if the oral
183 temperature is over 102° Fahrenheit (39° Celsius), Acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or Ibuprofen
196 (Advil®) may be given. Medicine bottles should be read carefully. It is important to know how
212 much of the medicine should be given and how often. If a child is under the age of 2 years, a
233 doctor should be contacted regarding the proper **dosage**. Aspirin is dangerous for children. Never
247 give a child aspirin.

251 When a child has a fever, he or she needs to stay well hydrated. The child should drink a lot
271 of healthy liquids like water, milk or 100% juices. Also, light clothing should be worn in order to
289 keep the body temperature down. If the fever is still over 104.0° Fahrenheit (40.0° Celsius) 30
307 minutes after medicine is given, the child should be given a sponge bath. A sponge bath involves
324 sponging off a child in a bathtub with a few inches of lukewarm water. Neither cold water nor ice
343 should be used.

346 Finally, it is important to know when to call a doctor. A doctor should be contacted right
363 away if a child less than 3 months of age has a fever; if a child's fever is over 105° Fahrenheit
385 (40.6° Celsius); or if a child has a seizure. It is also wise to call a doctor if a fever has lasted more
409 than 3 days or a fever went away and then soon returned.

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Adapted from "Fever" by RelayHealth, written by B.D. Schmitt, M.D.

Level 7.5

Understanding

1. What is a fever? What usually causes a fever? _____

2. When should a sponge bath be used? How should a sponge bath be given? _____

3. Name a method you have used to measure a fever. At what level would a fever be present with this method? _____

4. Besides medicine and sponge baths, what other two strategies can be used to treat a fever? _____

5. When should a doctor be called regarding a child's fever? (List at least three circumstances.) _____

6. What does the word **dosage** mean? How can one determine a proper dosage? _____

7. What is the body's normal temperature? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about a time when you or your child had a fever. How did you treat the fever? What were the results?
