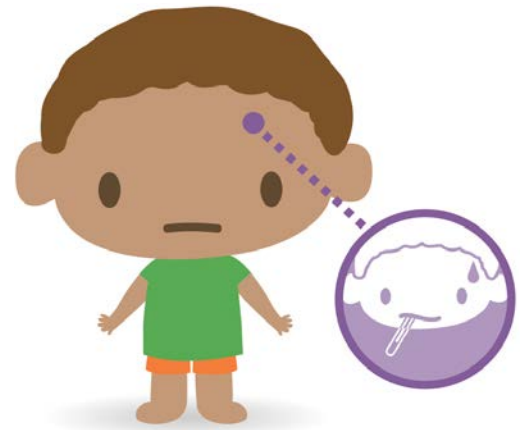


Fever


- Fever is one way your child’s body fights an infection. The most common illness in children is infection from a virus. There are thousands of different viruses. Fever can also be caused by an infection with bacteria.
- Fever itself will not harm your child.
- How high your child’s temperature is does not tell you how serious your child’s illness is. How your child is behaving is a more important sign.



Measuring Your Child's Temperature

Converting Celsius to Fahrenheit

Celsius	Fahrenheit
36.0	96.8
37.0	98.6
37.5	99.5
38.0	100.4
39.0	102.2
40.0	104.0
41.0	105.8

 **Seek Immediate Medical Attention if:**

- Your child is less than 3 months old with a fever
- Your child looks ill even after fever medication has been given (very sleepy, confused, irritable, or agitated)
- Your child is having trouble breathing
- Your child is severely dehydrated
- Your child is complaining of headaches, neck pain or stiffness or light sensitivity
- Your child has a bruise like rash on their body

Normal temperatures in children are*:

- Rectal: 36.6-38.0°C (97.9-100.4°F)
- Mouth: 35.5-37.5°C (97.7-99.5°F)
- Underarm: 36.5-37.5°C (94.5-99.1°)
- Ear (not recommended in infants): 35.8-38.0°C (96.4-100.4°F)

*According to the Canadian Pediatric Society

Children often feel warm to the touch when they have a fever. To confirm that your child has a fever, use a thermometer to measure your child's body temperature. If your child's temperature is higher than normal, he/she has a fever.

Key Points

- Fevers are very common in children and is a sign that their body is fighting an infection
- Viral infections are the most common cause of fevers in children
- Fever itself will not harm your child – more important is how your child is behaving while unwell
- Fevers caused by common viral infections usually last 3 to 5 days

Symptoms

- Fevers can make children feel uncomfortable. Usually, these symptoms are mild and the child may be slightly cranky or have aches and pains. Some children are less active and sleepier
- Some fevers are associated with shaking (chills or rigors). This is a way for the body to try to manage its temperature. Chills and rigors should not change your child's level of alertness and is not considered a seizure
- In children, fevers tend to appear in the afternoon and evenings
- How often the fever occurs and how long it lasts depends mostly on the type of infection causing the fever. Most caused by viruses last for 3 to 5 days but sometimes can last as longer

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Treatment

Fevers are a sign that your child’s body is fighting an infection and the best way to treat your child is to keep them hydrated and comfortable. Most children will get better on their own in 3-5 days.

1. Fluids
 - Many children will be less hungry when they are sick and not interested in eating. It’s ok if your child eats less solid foods for a few days
 - Make sure your child stays hydrated by encouraging them to drink small sips of fluids throughout the day (water, milk, soup, yogurt, popsicles or Pedialyte ®)
 - Monitor your child for signs of dehydration
2. Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen
 - Fevers help the body fight an infection and does not need to be treated all the time. If your child seems uncomfortable, you can give them acetaminophen or ibuprofen.
 - Here are examples of different preparations for children. Follow the dosing instructions on the packaging or as advised by a health care professional.

	Acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®)	Ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®)
Infants	Drops 80mg/1mL Liquid 80mg/5mL	Drops 40mg/mL
Children	Liquid 160mg/5mL Chewable tablets 80mg/tablet	Liquid 100mg/5mL Chewable tablets 50mg/tablet
Junior Strength	Chewable 160mg/tablet Regular tablets 325mg/tablet Extra strength tablets 500mg/tablet	Chewable tablets 100mg/tablet Caplets 100mg/tablet Tablets 200mg/tablet Tablets 400mg/tablet

How Often?	Can give every 4 hours, but no more than 5 doses in 24 hours	Can give every 6 hours but no more than 4 doses in 24 hours
Do Not Use If Your Child...	Has known liver disease or decreased liver function	Is less than 6 months old Appears moderately dehydrated Has known decreased kidney function Child has asthma and are known to have a sensitivity to aspirin

Beware

- products with aspirin (ASA) in them should not be given to children because of the risk of developing a serious illness called Reye’s syndrome
- cough, cold, and sinus products have other medications added. These products are usually not recommended or needed

3. Bathing

- Having a bath may make your child feel more comfortable, but it does not change their body temperature. Try a lukewarm bath or wet face cloths
- Avoid cold baths because they are uncomfortable and can make your child shiver, raising their temperature
- Alcohol baths or rubs or NOT recommended

4. Clothing

- Losing heat through the skin allows the body to cool down and may make your child feel more comfortable
- Dress your child in light clothing. If your child starts to shiver, add warmer clothing—remove them when the shivering stops

Fevers Myths

Myth #1: Fevers Cause Brain Damage

- Most fevers are less than 42°C (108°F) and do not cause brain damage. The body temperature needs to be much higher to cause damage, and this is more likely to occur with heat stroke or after exposure drugs or medications rather than typical childhood infections

Myth #2: Fevers are Bad for Children

- A fever is a sign that the body's defense system has been activated. Raising the body temperature may help the body fight an infection
- The main reason to use medications like Acetaminophen or Ibuprofen is to help keep your child comfortable

Myth #3: Fevers Should Always Respond to Anti-Fever Medicines

- Anti-fever medicines usually help to bring fevers down, but this is not always the case
- Whether or not the medicine works to reduce the fever back to a normal temperature is not related to the seriousness of the infection

Know Your Options

It can be scary when your child is sick. But in most cases, you don't need to go to the emergency department. If you're unsure, [we're here to help](#).



Please Note

The content provided on these pages is not intended to replace medical advice. If you have concerns about the health of your child, contact your health care provider directly. If your child has an emergency, go to the nearest emergency department or call 911. Alberta Health Services and Project HEAL strive to ensure that all material is correct but will not be held liable for errors or incomplete information contained in these pages.