

## FEVER IN CHILDREN

### I. FEVER FACTS

Almost always, fever means infection. Mild infections, like a cold, may cause a higher fever than a more serious illness. Infants and younger children usually have higher fevers than older children or adults.

Our body temperature, whether normal or too high, goes up and down depending upon the time of day and amount of activity. Rectal temperature is one degree higher than oral temperature. Temperatures less than 99.6° orally or 100.6° rectally can be considered normal.

If you suspect that the child has a fever, the only way to know is to actually take the temperature with a thermometer. By taking the temperature before you call the doctor you will greatly help him in deciding what should be done next to further diagnose or treat your child.

If you are not sure how to take a temperature or read a thermometer, ask the doctor or nurse to show you how. (See instructions on the next page also).

### II. TREATMENT OF FEVER

If your child has a fever and you are not sure why, see your doctor! A child who tugs at his ear needs to be checked for an ear infection, and one who begins drooling excessively may have a severe sore throat. If he has a cold or the flu or "whatever is going around," you can probably take care of the child best at home with just a few simple measures. It is usually a good idea to first consult with your doctor.

1. Try to encourage quiet indoor activities as your child desires.
2. Keep the room temperature normal and clothing and bed clothes light.
3. Avoid hot rooms, heavy pajamas, and extra blankets. These may only raise the fever higher.
4. Encourage extra fluids.

Usually fevers below 101° F. orally require no treatment. If the fever stays above 101° F. orally, or if your child seems to be uncomfortable from the fever, additional treatment can be used.

1. Sponge bathing with tepid (room temperature) water is often effective in helping to reduce a high fever, such as one greater than 103° F. This can be done by placing your child in a shallow tub of water and then gently sponging off all areas of the body repeatedly for approximately 10-15 minutes. It is often then helpful to repeat taking the temperature to see how effective this sponge bathing has been. Sponge bathing can be repeated periodically to help keep the fever below 103°. Please never use sponge baths with alcohol. This can be quite dangerous and could cause severe poisoning in your child.

2. Tylenol drops or Tempra drops 0.6 cc. - 60 mg.

0 - 6 mos. 0.3 cc.	12 - 18 mos. 0.9 cc.
6 - 9 mos. 0.45 cc.	18 - 24 mos. 1.2 cc.
9 - 12 mos. 0.6 cc.	

3. Tylenol elixir (120 mg. = 1 tsp. (5 cc.) is an effective medication for reducing fever in children. This should be given every 4-6 hours. The proper dose is listed below:

Less than 6 months.....	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoonful
6 mos. - 1 year.....	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful
$1\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 years.....	1 teaspoonful
4 - 6 years.....	2 teaspoonfuls

4. Aspirin is also very effective. If your child is under 5 years of age, use "childrens" aspirin only. Do not attempt to split up an adult aspirin or you may end up giving too much or too little. The correct dose is 1 "childrens" aspirin for each year of age up to 10 years old and this dose may be repeated every 4 - 6 hours. If you crush the aspirin in a teaspoon and mix it with a little honey, Karo syrup, jelly or applesauce, it may be easier for your child to take.
5. Under some circumstances your doctor may advise you to give both aspirin and Tylenol by alternating them. Do this only with your doctor's recommendation. Remember, both aspirin and Tylenol can cause poisoning if not taken in the correct amounts.

Once you have begun treatment, please check your child's temperature every 4 - 6 hours (unless he is sleeping) to help you and your doctor gauge how well the treatment is working. The temperature should be taken just before the next dose of aspirin or Tylenol is given.

### III. HOW TO TAKE A TEMPERATURE

For children under 4 years of age, the most reliable temperature will be a rectal temperature. Certainly infants and toddlers must have their temperature taken this way. Make sure the thermometer is clean by wiping it thoroughly with rubbing alcohol and then rinsing it off with warm water. Shake the thermometer down so that the top of the mercury level is below 98 degrees.

- Oral:
1. Place the long silver end of the thermometer under the child's tongue.
  2. Have the child close lips gently, being careful that he not bite the thermometer.
  3. Hold the thermometer under the tongue for 2 minutes before removing and reading. (Use a watch to time yourself).

- Rectal:
1. Lubricate the end of the thermometer with Vaseline.
  2. Spread the buttocks so that rectum can be easily seen.
  3. Insert the thermometer approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches and hold it in place for two minutes before removing and reading the temperature.

NOTE: A child should not drink hot or cold liquids for at least 15 minutes before his or her temperature is to be taken orally.

- IV. If you have any further questions about your child's fever, please call your doctor.