

# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FEVERS



## When **NOT** to Worry

Fevers usually last 3 days or fewer, and there are **NO** other worrisome symptoms

- If your child has a fever but is otherwise acting normal - you don't need to stress. Viruses are the most common cause for fevers in kids who have all their shots.
- Viruses need to run their course and **DON'T** get better with antibiotics. Many viral illnesses that cause fevers last less than 5 days.
- Children can seem tired and run down when they have fevers. You don't need to worry if they wake up easily from naps, and seem back to normal after their fever comes down.

### Fevers after getting shots

- Fevers can be normal after a child receives immunizations (their shots).
- Call your pediatrician if you have questions about fevers after your child gets their shots.



## When **TO CALL** your Pediatrician

You have an infant younger than 2 months

- A fever may be your baby's only warning sign that they are facing a serious illness.
- Call your doctor if your baby is under 2 months of age, and has a temperature that is 100.4°F or higher.

Your child's fever lasts 4 days or more

- Your pediatrician may need to see your child, and check for what may be causing the fever.

Your child's fever is 105°F or higher

- Your child has a fever of 105°F or higher and does not look like their usual self.
- The fever does not go down after taking acetaminophen/ibuprofen (it can take 30-60 minutes for these medicines to take effect; and 3-4 hours to see full effect).

Your child has **Worrisome Symptoms**

Your child is:

- Confused, will not wake up easily
- Not eating or drinking enough to urinate (go pee) at least 3 times per day
- Showing a dark red or purple rash
- Having trouble breathing
- Having severe tummy pain that does not stop



## RARE, but Important to Remember

### Febrile Seizures

About 5% of children will have seizures (also called fits or shaking spells) when they get fevers. Even though a seizure may look very scary, it usually does not cause long term harm.

If your child has twitching movements or seems like they "passed out":

- Lower them safely to the floor
- Do **NOT** put anything in your child's mouth
- Turn them on their side
- Call your pediatrician right away if the seizure lasts less than 5 minutes
- Call 911 if the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes, or if your child turns blue



## TREATMENT TIPS

- A fever itself is not harmful. It is the body's way of fighting an infection.
- Fevers often get worse in the late afternoon and early evening hours. This is part of the body's natural rhythm.
- The goal of treating the fever with acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) is to make your child more comfortable.
  - For children younger than 2 months, call your pediatrician first before giving acetaminophen.
  - For children younger than 6 months, call your pediatrician first before giving ibuprofen.
- Keep your child cool. Avoid warm clothing or heavy blankets.
- Prevent dehydration by offering plenty of clear (but not red) liquids such as: water, fruit juice or Pedialyte®.
- Let your child rest. They may nap more or sleep longer than usual while they are sick.