

FEVER GUIDE

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Fevers can be scary for parents to watch their kids go through. As a mother, I understand how frightening it is to see your child run a temperature and feel quite helpless. We are conditioned to think that fevers are bad things and we need to do everything that we can to reduce them, when in actuality fevers are our body's response to an invading infection. What we need to do is understand fevers better before they happen, so when our child does experience a fever we know what is okay and what we need to do, as well as the danger signs to look for so we are aware when we need to seek medical help.

We need to first understand what is considered a fever. A fever is a temperature between 38degreesC (100.4degreesF) and 40degreesC (104degreesF). A high fever is over 40degreesC (104degreesF).

What many people are scared of when it comes to fevers is brain damage and febrile seizures. Fever due to an infection does not cause brain damage. Febrile seizures are caused by a rapid increase in temperature, not elevation of the temperature. This happens in about 4% of children, rarely having any lasting consequences nor being predictive of seizure disorders. Fever-reducing medication has not been shown to prevent febrile seizures.

Fevers are a healthy immune response to an invading infection. Fevers set up an environment that is not conducive for an infection to live. White blood cells that defend the body against invading infections work more effectively with an elevated body temperature. Infections do not survive in high temperatures. Fevers are a body's innate intelligence, therefore fever reducers suppress the exact function that is helping the body to heal. If you reduce a fever, you confuse the immune system, whereby you do not fully recover from an infection, and this leads to an echo pattern where a child can be intermittently sick for a long period of time. In addition, Tylenol can be challenging on the liver and Ibuprofen or other NSAIDs can cause inflammation in the digestive tract and possible stomach bleeding.

There are certain situations when we should seek medical attention and it is important to be aware of the danger signs.

When to seek medical attention:

- If infant is under one month and has a temperature of over 38degreesC (100.4degreesF)
- If infant is under three months old with a fever over 38.5degreesC (101.5degreesF)
- Child over three months with a fever over 40degreesC (104degreesF)
- A child with a fever with a stiff neck, persistent vomiting, severe headache
- If your child has a fever with severe ear pain or severe belly pain
- If your child is lethargic, not waking up fully, seems weak, seems limp, just lying there, doesn't make eye contact, loses consciousness, starts to twitch, or seems hot on one side of the body and cold on the other
- Any child not taking in fluids or urinating a normal amount compared to what they are taking in
- A child just seems off or confused
- Fever stays high for more than 3-5 days
- If your child has a fever with no cold symptoms, this may mean they have a urinary tract infection
- If you are worried that your child has a serious illness

We need to figure out what is causing the fever. In most cases it is a viral infection which will heal with time. We need to support the healing process by supporting our child, comforting them and keeping them hydrated. When we support the natural healing process, and the fever breaks on its own, we strengthen their natural immunity. The human body has an amazing ability to fight off infections and heal itself. We just need to harness its healing capacity.

We can support the fever by applying cold packs to the child's neck. The homeopathic medicines aconite 6CH and belladonna 6CH help bring a fever down gently. We can also give them immune supporting supplements such as vitamin C, zinc, vitamin D and Echinacea. Water, herbal teas and bone broths are great for support and hydration.