



What it means when your child has a fever

When your child becomes ill it can be stressful. One of the first things your doctor may ask is, does your child have a fever?

A fever generally indicates that your child may have a bacterial or viral infection. Essentially his or her body is warming up to ward off the infection.

Here are some other fever facts you may find interesting...

- A normal temperature is around 98° F when taken orally. Generally, a fever is a temperature over 100° F if taken under the arm or over 100.4° F if taken rectally.
- Any infant under three months with a rectal temperature of 100.4° F or greater should receive immediate medical attention as they may have a serious illness. However, a drop in temperature may be even more concerning.
- Fevers aren't always bad. They're generally harmless and help your child fight infection. They can be considered a good sign that your child's immune system is working and the body is trying to rid itself of the infection.
- If your child has a fever, his or her heart and breathing rates naturally will speed up. You may notice that your child feels warm. He or she may appear flushed or perspire more than usual. His or her body will also require more fluids.
- Many conditions, such as an ear infection, common cold, or the flu, may cause a child to develop a fever. Even medication, injury or poison can cause a fever. It is always important to notice the signs of your child's illness in order to determine the cause of the fever.
- Except in the case of heat stroke, fever itself is not an illness – only a symptom of one. Fever itself is not a sign that your child needs an antibiotic.
- A child's normal body temperature varies with age, general health, activity level, time

- of day, and how much clothing the child is wearing.
- Usually there will be other signs such as a stiff neck or vomiting when the temperature means something more serious.
 - When dealing with the temperature of your child, you should base the severity of the temperature reading on how the child is acting. It's a good sign if a child has a higher temperature but is not showing any other symptoms. Sometimes a child, who has a low temperature but isn't moving around much or has other symptoms, may need medical attention. Speak to your doctor to interpret the situation.
 - Always consult your pediatrician if there is any question that your child may have a more serious illness.