

High Temperature in Children Advice

Your child has been assessed by one of our doctors who believe that it is safe for you to take your child home. This leaflet has been written by the doctors and nurses working in the Paediatric Emergency Department to remind you of some of the things that you need to know in order to look after your child in the future. We hope that this leaflet will be helpful to you. Please read it carefully.

A child is considered to have a fever if his/her temperature is over 38°C.

Why does my child have a temperature?

- Fevers are common in children.
- Fever is a way that the body fights infection—a fever in itself is not harmful.
- Fever is a sign of infection in the body—understanding the type of infection will tell us whether your child needs any other treatment.
- Viral infections are more common and do not need antibiotics—bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.

What can I do to make my child more comfortable?

Although the fever is not harmful it may make your child miserable. You can help to lower your child's fever by allowing them to lose heat through their skin.

- If your child feels hot then take most, but not all, of their clothes off. **Do not** wrap them up. They should be appropriately dressed for their surroundings.
- Keep the room well ventilated.
- If you have an electric fan then this will help to keep the room cool, although do not place it so that it is blowing directly onto your child.

Please note: Tepid sponging or bathing is **not** recommended.

Keep your child away from nursery or school while the fever persists, and tell the nursery or school of the illness.

Giving fluids

Encourage your child to have frequent amounts of clear fluids (if breastfeeding, continue this as normal) and encourage them to take more if signs of dehydration develop. Signs of dehydration include passing little or no urine (wee), dry mouth, absence of tears.

Giving medication

If your child seems well and is happy, there is no need to treat the fever with medication. However, if you think your child is miserable with the fever:

- Either paracetamol or ibuprofen can be used to reduce their temperature – we would suggest you try paracetamol to start with.
- If your child does not respond to the paracetamol then Ibuprofen may be used.
- We recommend you then use the medicine that your child responds to best, and only give medicine if they are unwell or miserable.
- Always measure the dose according to the instructions on the bottle or packet, or as directed by your doctor.

How do I know if I need to seek medical attention?

You need to see a doctor if your child has any of the following symptoms:	Also see a doctor if:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaining of a stiff neck or light hurting their eyes• Vomiting or refusing to drink much.• Appears dehydrated (dry mouth, sunken eyes, sunken soft spot on top of the baby's head, absence of tears, poor overall appearance, poor urine output)• Rash –non-blanching (use a clear glass and roll over the rash – if it does not go paler/white then attend ED).• More sleepy than usual.• Problems with breathing.• In pain.• Cold hands and feet• Convulsion – they become unconscious, stiff, with jerking of their arms or legs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child is under 3 months and has a fever (temperature of 38°C or above).• The fever persists after 48 hours• You are concerned about your child or unable to look after your child

Febrile convulsions

Febrile convulsions are fits (seizures) that sometimes happen in children (usually between 6 months and 5 years) who have a high fever. They can be worrying for parents but they do not usually cause any long term health effects. Usually they will not need any regular treatment with tablets or medicines following a convulsion. Some children will experience a febrile fit again. The risk of another one gets a lot less after the age of 3 years. There is nothing you can do to predict or prevent a febrile convulsion but knowing what to do if it does happen may help you and your child:

- It is important to remain calm and stay with your child.
- Place your child on the floor or bed on their side.
- Make sure you do not put anything in their mouth or slap or shake them.
- Try to watch exactly what happens so that you can describe it later.
- Take a note of how long the convulsion lasts.
- Seek medical advice immediately.
- If the fit lasts longer than 5 minutes, **call 999 for an ambulance.**

Always check a child with fever regularly, including during the night (how often depends on the situation). If you are concerned about your child we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU department where you were seen.

If you are at all concerned about your injury please contact the relevant Accident and Emergency Department or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):
Royal Gwent Hospital: 01633 234056
Nevill Hall Hospital: 01873 732073
Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353 or 802349
Ysbyty Anuerin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318

References:

- <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg160/chapter/1-recommendations#clinical-assessment-of-children-with-fever>
- <http://cks.nice.org.uk/feverish-children-management#!scenario>
- <http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/f/article/feverinchildren/>

“This document is available in Welsh / Mae’r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.