

FRAMINGHAM PEDIATRICS



Fever

Fever means that the body temperature is higher than normal. The average normal body temperature is 98.6 F. Most people agree that a fever is a rectal temperature greater than 100.4 F or an oral temperature greater than 99.5 F. Temperatures below normal are usually not worrisome unless they occur in very young babies. Body temperature is usually lowest in the morning and highest in the late afternoon and evening. This is also true when children have a fever.

Fever itself is not an illness but is a sign that the body is fighting an infection. Fever is generally beneficial and not harmful to a child. Fever alone never causes brain damage unless the fever is very high (over 106 or 107 F.)

Although fever doesn't cause damage, it can make a child uncomfortable. The usual reason for trying to lower a child's fever is to make him or her more comfortable. If your child is uncomfortable with a fever, you will generally see him or her act much better after you have cooled him or her down. We recommend the following when your child has a fever:

- ◆ Always check temperature with a thermometer. Feeling the forehead for skin temperature is not a reliable indicator of fever. In babies, check temperature rectally. Ear thermometers are not at all accurate in babies. In older children, check the temperature by mouth or under the arm. Temperature strips applied to the forehead and pacifier thermometers are not accurate.
- ◆ Call our office **immediately** for any temperature greater than 100.4 F rectally in a baby under three months old.
- ◆ Call our office if the fever is associated with seizures, neck pain, rash, difficulty breathing, inconsolable persistent crying, or difficulty arousing your child.
- ◆ Dress your child lightly. This will help him or her cool down.
- ◆ Encourage your child to drink plenty of cool fluids.
- ◆ If your child is **over three months**, you may give acetaminophen (Tylenol®, Tempra®, Panadol®) every four hours or if your child is **over 6 months**, ibuprofen (Motrin®, Advil®) every six hours if she or he is uncomfortable from the fever. See our other handouts for dosing of these medications. If your child is having a hard time taking these medicines or is vomiting, another alternative is the use of acetaminophen suppositories (Feverall®,) which can be inserted into the rectum.

Fever can be frightening in a child. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office to discuss them.

call time: 8:30 - 9:00 am
www.framinghampediatrics.com