

INFANT AND TODDLER FEVER

Fever is the body's response to an infection. It serves a useful purpose by helping the body fight viruses or bacteria. A higher temperature helps the body fight the infection. When an infection is overcome, the fever will go away.

HEALTH NOTES



It is normal for your child's temperature to vary. Age, activity, and the time of the day are factors that affect your child's temperature. Infants tend to have higher temperatures than older children. A child 0 to 3 years of age has a fever if his or her temperature is 100.4°F or higher. It can be taken rectally, orally or by an axillary or temporal device. A child's temperature can be affected by a hot shower, bath, physical activity, or outside temperature.

How to manage your child's fever

Call medical advice right away if your child is age 2 months or younger and has a temperature of 100.4°F or higher. Medical advice will give you information and help arrange care as needed.

A higher fever does not always mean that an infection is severe. Fever under 101°F may not need to be treated. You may decide to treat your child with medicine if he or she is uncomfortable. Fever-reducing medicine may also be advised if your child has a history of febrile convulsions (convulsions linked to a rapid increase in body temperature). Acetaminophen and ibuprofen are medicines used to lower your child's fever. Whatever medicine you choose, be sure to read and follow the instructions on the label. It is important to give your child the correct dose. That dose is based on the weight and temperature of your child.

Medicines

Acetaminophen (Tylenol® or multiple other brand names)

This medicine comes in many forms such as infant drops, syrups, chewable tablets, tablets, suppositories, and capsules. The dose of acetaminophen that you give your child should be based on the child's weight. The usual dose of acetaminophen is 120 mg for every 20 pounds, or 10 - 15 mg for every kg of body weight.

It is very important to not overuse this medicine. Acetaminophen should be given every 4 to 6 hours, but never give more than 5 doses in a 24 hour period. In higher than recommended doses, this medicine can lead to liver damage.

Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) drops, syrup, or tablets

This medicine comes in many forms: drops, elixir, suspension, and chewable tablets are the most common forms used for children. It is not recommended to give ibuprofen to children under the age of 6 months. Ibuprofen is approved for children 6 months and older. It should not be given to children who are dehydrated or vomiting continuously. The dose should be based on your child's weight and baseline temperature.

For more information

Visit kp.org/health

- Read about Fever in the Health Encyclopedia.

Call Kaiser Permanente Medical Advice

- Talk to your medical advice nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (703) 359-7878 or 1-800-777-7904 or TTY (703) 359-7616 or 1-800-700-4901.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol®)

AGE	WEIGHT*	INFANT DROPS 80 MG/0.8 ML	CHILDREN'S ELIXIR 160 MG/5 ML	CHEWABLE TABLETS 80 MG TABS
0-5 mos.	6-11 lbs. (2.7-5 kg)	0.4 ml	Product not used at this age.	Product not used at this age.
6-11 mos.	12-17 lbs. (5.5-7.7 kg)	0.8 ml	½ tsp	1 tablet
1-2 yrs.	18-23 lbs. (8.2-10.5 kg)	1.2 ml	¾ tsp	1½ tablets
2-3 yrs.	24-35 lbs. (10.9-15.9 kg)	1.6 ml	1 tsp	2 tablets
4-5 yrs.	36-47 lbs. (16.3-21.4 kg)	2.4 ml	1½ tsps	3 tablets

* Weight given is average for the age range.

Ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®)

AGE	WEIGHT*	INFANT DROPS 50 MG/1.25 ML	CHILDREN'S ELIXIR 100 MG/5 ML	CHEWABLE TABLETS 50 MG TABS
6-11 mos.	12-17 lbs. (5.5-7.7 kg)	1.25 ml	2.5 ml	Product not used at this age.
1-2 yrs.	18-23 lbs. (8.2-10.5 kg)	1.875 ml	3.75 ml	1 tablet
2-3 yrs.	24-35 lbs. (10.9-15.9 kg)	2.5 ml	5 ml	2 tablets
4-5 yrs.	36-47 lbs. (16.3-21.4 kg)	-	7.5 ml	3 tablets

* Weight given is average for the age range.

A dose should be given every 6 to 8 hours, and no more than 4 doses should be given in a 24 hour period. Unless otherwise directed by your child's doctor, we recommend using one fever medicine at a time.

It is also important to read the labels of all other medicines that you give your child. Acetaminophen and ibuprofen may be contained in other over-the-counter medicines, such as cold remedies. Using more than one product at the same time may cause an overdose and may be harmful to your child. Be sure to not give your child multiple doses of the same type of medicine. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are unsure of the right dose you should give your child of either acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Acetaminophen and ibuprofen:

- will reduce your child's temperature for 4 to 8 hours,
- will not cure the cause of the fever until the cause goes away, and
- may not bring your child's temperature back down to normal.

Other ways to manage your child's fever

There are other things you can do to help your child cope with a fever.

- Dress your child in lightweight clothing and keep the house temperature cool.
- Encourage your child to drink extra clear liquids. Water is the best option. The higher your child's fever, the more fluids he or she will need. This will help avoid dehydration.
- Keep your child's diet light (soup, broth).
- Baths are no longer advised and often cause shivering and discomfort to the child. Shivering increases the child's temperature. If you feel you need to give your child a bath, use water warm enough to avoid shivering. Do not use rubbing alcohol as this may also cause shivering.
- Your child may play in the house, but limit running around and encourage sleep.
- If your child has a fever, keep him or her away from other children until the fever is gone for 24 hours.

When to call

Call the Medical Advice Line right away if your child or infant:

- develops a temperature of 104°F or above,
- is younger than 2 months and has any degree of fever,
- becomes weak or very upset and cannot be consoled,
- develops a rash or stiff neck, and/or
- has any unusual movements.

You may decide to call your medical advice nurse if your child has other symptoms as well as a fever. You can call if your child also has a sore throat, cough, or earache. You may not need to call if your child is over 12 months of age and is eating and sleeping well. You may wait to see if the fever improves on its own or with home treatment. It is best to contact your medical advice nurse if your child has a fever for more than 72 hours. This is advised even if your child has no other problems.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent medical problems, or if you have further questions, please consult your doctor or member of your health care team. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names. Similar products may be used.

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