

Fever Guide CapitalCare Pediatrics Troy

Fever is not a disease but usually a sign of infection. While some infections are serious, most are not and children handle them very well. Fever can make your child uncomfortable but does not make a child sicker. Medicines such as Tylenol or Motrin do not cure infections. They bring down the fever and help a child feel better, so he or she can drink more fluids. Take your child's temperature with a digital thermometer on the forehead or under the armpit. Don't use temperature alone to judge how sick your child is. Instead, look at how your child acts.

Please Call Us If

- If your child's temperature reaches 105°F (40.6°C).
- If your baby under one month of age has a fever of 100.4 or more (38°C).
- If your baby between one and 3 months of age has a fever of 100.8 or more (38.2°C).
- Your child has a dry mouth, cracked lips, or cries without tears.
- Your baby has a dry diaper for at least 8 hours, or he is urinating less than usual.
- Your child is less alert, less active, or is acting differently than he usually does.
- Your child has a seizure or has abnormal movements of the face, arms, or legs. While the episode might be dramatic, there is usually no significant side effect from a seizure that comes on with a fever.
- Your child is drooling and not able to swallow.
- Your child has a stiff neck, severe headache, confusion, or is difficult to wake.
- Your child has a fever for longer than 4-5 days.
- Your child is crying or irritable and cannot be soothed.
- Your child seems to be getting sicker.
- The fever gets much higher.
- There are new or worse symptoms along with the fever. These may include a cough, a rash, or ear pain.

Manage your child's fever

- **Give your child plenty of liquids:**
 - Help your child drink at least 6 to 8 eight-ounce cups of clear liquids each day. Give your child water, juice, or broth. Ask if you should give your child an oral rehydration solution (ORS) to drink.
 - If you are breastfeeding or feeding your child formula, continue to do so. Your baby may not feel like drinking his regular amounts with each feeding. If so, feed him smaller amounts more often.
- **Dress your child in lightweight clothes.** Shivers may be a sign that your child's fever is rising. Do not put extra blankets or clothes on him. This may cause his fever to rise even higher. Dress your child in light, comfortable clothing. Cover him with a lightweight blanket or sheet.
- **Use a cool compress** in lukewarm water by placing cool washcloths on the forehead, back and abdomen and then letting the wetness evaporate. You can do the same in a lukewarm bath as long as you keep allowing the back and abdomen to get wet and then air dry. . **Do not** put your child in a cold water or ice bath.
- **DO NOT use rubbing alcohol on your child to lower the temperature:** Rubbing alcohol is dangerous and can poison your child
- **If the medicine is a liquid, use the measuring tool that comes with the medicine**—not a kitchen spoon.
- Do not give aspirin to children under 18 years of age.

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Guidelines by Age

Up to one month: **Under 100.4** Check the temperature again in a hour. Give your baby extra to drink or nurse. Be sure she/he is not overdressed. **Please call if the temperature rises to 100.4 or greater or if your child seems unusually irritable, lethargic.**

1 month to 3 months **Up to 100.8** Check the temperature again in a hour. Give your baby extra to drink or nurse. Be sure she/he is not overdressed. Medication is not needed. **Please call if the temperature rises to 100.8 or greater or if your child seems unusually irritable, lethargic or uncomfortable.**

3-6 months **Up to 102 F (38.9 C)** Encourage your child to rest and drink plenty of fluids. Medication isn't needed. **Call the doctor if your child seems unusually irritable, lethargic or uncomfortable.**

3-6 months **Above 102 F (38.9 C)** Call the doctor; he or she may recommend that you bring your child in for an exam.

6-24 months **Above 102 F (38.9 C)** Give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol, others). If your child is age 6 months or older, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others) is OK, too. Read the label carefully for proper dosage. Please don't use ibuprofen if there is any concern with dehydration. Vomiting or diarrhea are the most common reasons for this. Don't give aspirin to an infant or toddler. Call the doctor if the fever doesn't respond to the medication or lasts longer than one day.

2-17 years **Up to 102 F (38.9 C)** Encourage your child to rest and drink plenty of fluids. Medication isn't needed. Call the doctor if your child seems unusually irritable or lethargic or complains of significant discomfort.

2-17 years **Above 102 F (38.9 C)** If your child seems uncomfortable, give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol, others) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others). Read the label carefully for proper dosage, and be careful not to give your child more than one medication containing acetaminophen, such as some cough and cold medicines. Please don't use ibuprofen if there is any concern with dehydration. Vomiting or diarrhea are the most common reasons for this. Avoid giving aspirin to children or teenagers.

Acetaminophen Dosing (Tylenol and Similar)

Child's weight (pounds)	6-11	12-17	18-23	24-35	36-47	48-59	60-71	72-95	96+	
Liquid 160 mg/ 5 milliliters (mL)	1.25	2.5	3.75	5	7.5	10	12.5	15	20	mL
Liquid 160 mg/ 1 teaspoon (tsp)	--	½	¾	1	1½	2	2½	3	4	tsp
Chewable 80 mg tablets	--	--	1½	2	3	4	5	6	8	tabs
Chewable 160 mg tablets	--	--	--	1	1½	2	2½	3	4	tabs
Adult 325 mg tablets	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1½	2	tabs
Adult 500 mg tablets	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	tab

Ibuprofen Dosing (Advil, Motrin and Similar)

Please don't use before 6 months of age. Don't confuse ibuprofen infants' drops with children's liquid. The drops are much more concentrated. Hint: Drops come with a syringe; children's liquid comes with a cup.

You can repeat the dose every six to eight hours. Don't give more than four doses in 24 hours.

Child's weight (pounds)	12-17	18-23	24-35	36-47	48-59	60-71	72-95	96+	
Infant Drops 50 mg/ 1.25 mL	1.25	1.875	2.5	3.75	5	--	--	--	mL
Liquid 100 mg/ 5 milliliters (mL)	2.5	4	5	7.5	10	12.5	15	20	mL
Liquid 100 mg/ 1 teaspoon (tsp)	½	¾	1	1½	2	2½	3	4	tsp
Chewable 50 mg tablets	--	--	2	3	4	5	6	8	Tabs
Junior-strength 100 mg tablets	--	--	--	--	2	2½	3	4	Tabs
Adult 200 mg tabs	--	--	--	--	1	1	1½	2	tab

Adapted from Mayo Clinic Guidelines

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