



Fever Information and Recommendations

Fever seems to be misunderstood by many parents. Fever is actually a good thing! Fever is a sign that the immune system is working to fight invading viruses, bacteria, or other bugs. Our bodies need fever to fight off illness.

Fever is a temperature over 100.4 as a result of illness. Fever occurs when cell activators stimulate the hypothalamus to increase body temperature. This is done by increasing heat production, increasing muscle tone, and constricting blood vessels.

Fever is only a symptom - not a disease or illness. It plays only a small part in helping your providers know what is going on with your child.

Fever Facts:

- Fever can help the body recover from illness faster.
 - Many germs can't replicate as well when the body temperature is elevated.
 - Fever enables the bodies to produce interferon, an anti-viral substance.
 - Fever signals the body to increase white blood cell production to fight against infection.
- The degree of fever is not important.
 - It is important to **treat the child not the fever.**
 - If child is playful, interactive, and drinking - no fever reducer is needed.
 - If child is uncomfortable, refusing to drink - fever reducer maybe useful.
 - If child is listless, refusing to respond to questions, only sleeping - they need to be seen in office.
 - The height of the fever does not correlate with severity of illness.
- Fever caused by illness does not cause brain damage.
 - Some viral illnesses will cause fever up to 104-105.
 - Brain damage has been associated with high fevers in 107- 108 range; but this has only really been seen with extreme environmental conditions (child being trapped in a hot car).
- Only 4% of children will have febrile (fever) seizures.
 - More likely to occur in children 6 months to 6 yrs.
 - Although frightening to watch; they are not associated with any permanent damage or side effects.
 - No one knows why febrile seizures occur, although evidence suggests they are linked to certain viral illnesses
- Fevers will not always reduce with medication.
 - The brain has an internal thermostat that is attempting to regulate temperature to stop illness. The body will continue to signal the brain to make fever as part of the defense process. This will cause the fever to go up and down; despite medication.
 - Fevers may go away for several hours and then come back.
- Fever is a symptom, not a disease.
- **All infants less than 10 weeks of age should be seen emergently for fever.**
- Routine alternating of Tylenol and Motrin is not recommended to control temperature.
 - As reviewed above there is very little benefit to eliminating fever during illness.
 - There is insufficient evidence to prove that alternating Tylenol and Motrin is safe.
 - There may be a situation where a provider will recommend alternating medications but this should only be done under the direction of a provider and not done routinely.
- **Fever is a good thing, and not something that should cause alarm or fear.**
- Most important treatment of fever is fluids, encourage lots of oral fluids to keep child well hydrated. They don't have to eat, but they need to drink more than they typically drink.

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