



## Fever Questions

Q: Does fever cause brain damage?

A: No.

Q: Can fever cause a seizure?

A: Very rarely, and these children recover just fine.

Only 1-4% of young children, from about 6 months to 5 years of age, are prone to these “febrile seizures.” The seizures are brief, generally a few minutes (yes, it feels much longer if you are watching). If they occur it is usually the first day of illness when the fever first starts and rises rapidly. Once a high fever develops, the chance of a seizure has usually passed. If your child does have a seizure, do call us.

Q: If I don’t treat a fever, will it go higher and higher?

A: No. Temperatures go up and down, even without medicine.

Q: How high is “too high?”

A: There is no dangerous temperature.

Q: What about a heat stroke?

A: Heat stroke is injury that occurs when a person is in a hot place and can no longer control his/her temperature. Remember, a child with a fever is essentially always in a place cooler than their body, so heat can leave the body naturally.

Q: Why should I treat a fever?

A: For the comfort of the person. Fever can make us feel weak or dizzy or achy.

Q: What medicine should I use to treat the fever?

A: There are 2 medicines you can use: **acetaminophen** (Tylenol and other brands) and **ibuprofen** (Advil, Motrin, and other brands) for babies and children over 8 weeks of age.

Be SURE to read labels of any other medications you are using to see if they contain these ingredients. Any medicine that includes “fever reducer” or “pain reliever” probably has one of these. Especially check any cold medicine.

Q: How often?

A: Acetaminophen Oral Suspension and tablet doses can be repeated after 4 hours, with a maximum of 5 doses in 24 hours. For older adolescents, Extra Strength Tablets can be taken every 6 hours with a max of 3 doses in 24 hours. Ibuprofen doses can be repeated after 6 hours.

Some people like to alternate acetaminophen with ibuprofen; If you chose this option you may give a medicine every 3 hours. (Example: acetaminophen at 6 am, ibuprofen at 9 am, acetaminophen at noon, etc.)

It is a good idea to write down the time and which medicine you give.

Q: Really high fever means really serious infection, right?

A: No. Your child's appearance and behavior are the best clues to the seriousness of the infection. You want to see your child able to drink fairly well, smile at you, talk or vocalize normally, and move without apparent pain.

Q: What if a very young baby has a fever?

A: In a baby under 2 months of age you should call the office night or day for a rectal temperature over 100.4. While the fever itself isn't harmful, it may signal serious infection in these very young babies.

Q: Should my child avoid drinking milk during a fever?

A: Not usually. If there is vomiting or diarrhea with the fever, clear liquids are better.