



WHEN IS A FEVER TOO HIGH?

Brought to you by Global Children's Fund @ www.KeepYourChildSafe.org

Dealing with fevers is a natural part of parenting. But when your child is sick with a high fever, it can be a nerve wracking experience. This information will help parents discern when their child's fever is too high.

GLOBAL CHILDREN'S FUND

--- SAFETY BRIEF --- SAFETY BRIEF --- SAFETY BRIEF --- SAFETY BRIEF --- SAFETY BRIEF ---

What is a Fever?

Fever is a body's natural response to fighting infection. The body temperature rises to aid the immune system in fighting off the unwanted invader. As such, fever is frequently used to gauge how sick a child is. Generally speaking the higher the fever, the harder at work the body is in fighting off the threat. It is important to know that children's body temperatures can naturally fluctuate during the day by a degree or two, and most kids will hit a high temperature of around 100.2 in the early evenings.

When do you call the Doctor?

For infants under three months old, anything 100.4 degrees (F) or above you should call the doctor. Infants between three and six months of age, call the doctor when temperatures are 101 degrees or above. For children six months and above, call when temperatures reach 103(F). An infant's temperature should be taken rectally. With older children, it isn't so much the degree that's important, but the symptoms that accompany it. Most parents choose to make an appointment when their child is showing significant symptoms and has a fever of 101 or higher.

When to take your child to the Emergency Room?

Children can have extremely high fevers when they are sick. It's not at all uncommon to see fevers of 104 or 105. Fever generally becomes dangerous at around 106 or above, where it has the potential to cause brain damage or other serious problems. Generally speaking, if your child's temperature hits 105, you should call a pediatrician immediately. Explain the symptoms and follow their advice. In infants, you should call your doctor immediately if your baby's temperature is much higher than the guidelines listed above. Your physician will advise you on an appropriate course of action.

Reducing Fever:

Reducing a fever is only necessary to help in the child's comfort, or to get a dangerously high fever (105-107) under control. Otherwise it is not necessary to treat a fever. If your child seems comfortable, it is best just to let it run its course. The most recommended medicine for treating fever is Children's Motrin or Children's Tylenol. You can also lay a wet cloth over your child's forehead or give them a **sponge bath using water at room temperature**. Do not use hot or cold water, or alcohol.

Food & Fluids:

You should not force food on your child when they have a fever, but allow them to eat as they desire. You should encourage them to **drink extra fluids** to avoid dehydration.

Other Danger Signs to look for:

No matter what your child's temperature, seek immediate medical care for the following symptoms:

- Rapid or weak pulse
- Child is irritable, confused or lethargic. (Doesn't wake up easily)
- Difficulty breathing
- Refuses to eat or drink for extended period
- Shows signs of severe dehydration
- On rare occasions, some children may experience fever convulsions, which are related to a rapid climb in temperature rather than a very high temperature. If this happens call your Dr. immediately for guidance in handling the condition. Once a high fever has developed, the risk of a seizure drops.

Trust Your Instinct:

You know your child and you know when your child isn't acting quite right. A fever of 102 degrees may be more serious than one of 105 depending on the symptoms. Watch your child closely when they're sick, and trust your instinct.