

Fever in childhood

A fever is when a person's body temperature rises above 38 °C.

When a child's temperature is 37 °C, they are said to have a low-grade fever, but not a fever.

To be sure that a child has a fever, we must always take their temperature.

A fever is usually the body's natural response to an invasion. The most common cause is minor infections, particularly viral ones.

It can cause a feeling of chill, malaise, tiredness and a loss of appetite, but, in general, children tolerate a fever well and it does not cause them any significant problems.

How do you use a thermometer?

The thermometers available on the market are digital. To take a temperature, place the thermometer under the armpit for about two minutes or until it beeps. For babies, the rectum is another option.

What should you do if your child has a fever?

- Remove any excess clothing without letting them get cold (a coat can cause the temperature to rise).
- **Give them water and fruit juices, but do not force them to eat.**
- You can place damp towels on their body.
- You can bathe them in lukewarm water (never cold) for a few minutes.

How should a fever be treated?

If, after taking the above measures, the fever remains above 38 °C and the child is feeling generally unwell, you can give them fever-reducing medicines (*paracetamol*,

ibuprofen) every 6 hours at the dose usually recommended by your paediatrician.

Do not give them antibiotics unless instructed to do so by your paediatrician.



You should see your paediatrician if:

- The child is a baby under three months old.
- The temperature is 39 °C or higher or persists for more than two days.
- Skin rashes appear.
- The child is very irritable.
- Seizures occur.
- The child has a severe headache.
- You notice persistent vomiting.
- You notice difficulty breathing.
- You notice severe lethargy.