

FEVER

Fevers can be a scary thing for a parent to experience especially in very young children. Most of the time it is a natural body response that should be monitored but not necessarily treated. Here are some current guidelines in how to treat a fever and when to take it more seriously. It is only a guide and you still need to contact your healthcare practitioners for an individual assessment if you are worried or not sure.

Benefits of a Fever

- Kills viral or bacterial organisms as they can only survive within a narrow window of temperature.
- Stops organisms from replicating and growing.
- Higher body temperatures increase white blood cell production and natural immune defences.
- Inhibits iron absorption from the digestive tract making it unavailable for bacteria to use as an energy source.

What To Look Out For

It is more important to look at your child than focus on the fever. To help you assess the potential seriousness of the situation look at how they are feeling, alertness, breathing difficulties, colour of their skin, and whether they are drinking less or going to the toilet less (this may be a sign of dehydration).

What To Do

- Make sure children are not dehydrated – breast milk, rehydration formulas
- Make child comfortable – don't worry if they want to take off or put on more clothing

Old Ideas

- Tepid baths or sponging – this makes the body work harder as it is trying to raise the core temperature and might be a waste of metabolic resources and energy.
- Fever will NOT just continue going up unchecked. It will stop at some point.
- Febrile seizures occur above 40 degrees Celsius – the truth is that febrile seizures can occur at ANY temperature and the majority of children have no lasting ill effects from them.

When To Go To Emergency Department

- When your baby is less than 3 months old you ALWAYS go to Emergency
- When the fever is above 40 degrees Celsius
- When the fever is lasting more than 7 days

Antipyretic Medications

This is more to make the parents or the child feel better that they are taking something, but their benefits are doubtful. In some cases it has been shown that they may increase the duration of the illness such as Chicken pox, Influenza A, and Shigella.

This information does not replace a consultation with a qualified health practitioner. You should always get the appropriate tests done or be under the supervision of a qualified health practitioner before embarking on taking high doses of any supplement.