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### **HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR CHILD WITH FEVER**

1. Do not be afraid of fever. Fever is necessary to fight an infection.
2. Fever is present when your child's rectal temperature is over 101°.
3. Many children become uncomfortable when their temperature is over 101° rectally, and for that reason, we recommend treating the fever.
4. If your child becomes sick with a fever (coughing, difficulty breathing, vomiting, watery diarrhea, lethargic or irritable) or just not acting normal - please call the office. **Never feel uncomfortable about calling.**
5. All fevers do not require antibiotics. Most fevers in children are caused by viruses, which get better without antibiotics. **Antibiotics do not treat viral infections.**
6. **Fever caused by a virus may last 1-4 days. Call our office if the fever lasts greater than 4 days.**
7. If your baby is **less than 3 months old** and has a temperature over **100.4°**, call our office **immediately. This can sometimes be more serious.**

#### **Treatment**

1. Keep your child dressed comfortably when fever is present. When your child has fever, the body controls the fever by allowing heat loss through the skin (this is why your child's skin feels warm when fever is present). Overdressing your child may prevent normal heat loss through the skin.
2. **NEVER** use heavy covers, blankets, or quilts to cover your child. A single sheet is all that is necessary.
3. Keep the room temperature between 68-70°. Air conditioning is fine.
4. Cool air vaporizer or humidifier (winter) will make your child sleep more comfortably.
5. It is safe to put your child to sleep with a fever. Check every 4-6 hours.
6. **NEVER use alcohol baths.** The alcohol can be absorbed through your child's skin and make your child sick.
7. The best method to quickly lower your baby's fever is with a tepid bath. The water temperature should be between 90-95° (warm to touch). In order to be most effective, your child's entire body, up to the neck, should be under water. It may be necessary for you to get in the bath with your child. Keep the bathroom warm. If your child becomes more irritable with a bath, do not use this method.
8. Wrapping your child in cold towels, or just sponging with cool water is not as effective in lowering fever.
9. Continue to offer your child plenty of fluids. For babies under 1 year, breast milk or formula should be continued. **If your child will not drink, please call the office.**

#### **Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen**

1. These medicines will help make your child more comfortable and may lower the fever. Do not become alarmed if your child's temperature does not return to normal when using these medicines. Use the doses based on your child's weight, as indicated in the charts on the last page.
2. Fever of 104° does not mean your child is sicker than a child with a fever of 101°. More important is how your child is acting when the temperature is elevated. If your child is pleasant and playful, do not be concerned. Some children will become lethargic or irritable with fever. If your child improves when the fever is reduced, continue to give these medicines.
3. **If your child is irritable or lethargic when the fever is reduced, please call our office.**
4. Continue using these medicines for at least 12 hours after your child's fever has returned to normal (less than 101°).

## How Often Are these Medicines Given

**Acetaminophen: every 4 hours**

**Ibuprofen: every 6 hours**

Ibuprofen can be alternated with Acetaminophen every 6 hours so that one drug or the other is administered every 3 hours. **Example:** Ibuprofen followed by Acetaminophen 3 hours later and Ibuprofen again 3 hours later and Acetaminophen again 3 hours later.

### Where to Take the Temperature:

1. **Rectal** temperatures are the most accurate. Oral or eardrum temperatures are also accurate if done properly. **Axillary** (armpit) temperatures are the least accurate but are better than no measurement.
2. **For a child younger than 5 years old**, a **Rectal** temperature is preferred. **Axillary** temperature is adequate for screening if it is taken correctly. If your infant is less than 3 months old *and* Axillary temperature is over 99°F, check it by taking the rectal temperature. The reason we need a rectal temperature taken in young infants is if they have a true fever (<100.4°), they need to be evaluated immediately.
3. For a child 5 years old or older, take the temperature **orally** (by mouth).

### Rectal Temperatures

1. Lay your child across your lap face down.
2. Before you insert the thermometer, apply some Vaseline to the end of the thermometer or use a pre-lubricated thermometer cover.
3. Gently insert the rectal thermometer ½ inch (enough to cover the tip of the thermometer) Never try to force it past any resistance.
4. Hold your child still while the thermometer is in.
5. Leave the thermometer in your child's rectum until you hear a beep.

### Axillary Temperatures

1. Place the tip of the thermometer in a dry armpit.
2. Close the armpit by holding the elbow against the chest for 5 minutes. You may miss a fever if the thermometer is removed before 5 minutes.
3. If you are uncertain about the result, check it with a rectal temperature.

### Oral Temperatures

1. Be sure your child has not had a cold/hot drink within the last 30 minutes.
2. An accurate temperature depends on proper placement. Place the tip of the thermometer under one side of the tongue and toward the back of the mouth. Have your child hold it in place with the lips and fingers (not the teeth) and breathe through the nose, keeping the mouth closed.
3. Leave it in place for 3 minutes or until you hear a beep.
4. If your child can't keep his or her mouth closed because of nose blockage, suction out the nose.

### Ear Temperature

Since most ear canals have a slight bend, it is important to use the following simple ear canal straightening technique. This will make it easier for the thermometer to view the warmest part of the eardrum.

#### Children up to 1 year of age:

1. Using your free hand, grasp the earlobe at the top.
2. Gently, but firmly, pull the earlobe straight back and insert the thermometer into the ear canal and press the activation button. Hold in the ear canal until you hear a beep (1-3 seconds).

#### Children over 1 year of age:

1. Using your free hand, grasp the earlobe at the top.
2. Gently, but firmly, pull the earlobe up and back and insert the thermometer into the ear canal and press the activation button. Hold in the ear canal until you hear a beep (1-3 seconds).