

UNDERSTANDING FEVER IN CHILDREN

WHAT TEMPERATURE IS CONSIDERED A FEVER IN CHILDREN?

Fever is the body's natural response to infections, helping to activate the immune system. It's important to understand what constitutes a fever and how to handle it properly. The average body temperature for a child is 98.6°F, but a **fever** is generally considered a temperature of **100.4 °F or higher**.

Infants less than 2 months old are at increased risk for more serious infections. If your newborn has a [fever](#) (rectal temperature of 100.4°F or greater), or a rectal temperature below 97°F, they need to be promptly evaluated by a medical provider.

WHAT CAN CAUSE A MILD FEVER?

Mild temperature increases can be triggered by:

- Exercise
- Excessive clothing
- A hot bath or hot weather
- Warm food or drinks

Teething does not cause a high fever, so if your baby is teething and has a high temperature, another cause should be investigated.

FEVER AND ITS RELATION TO ILLNESS SEVERITY

The height of the fever does **not** always correlate with the seriousness of the illness. For example:

- A **101.0°F** fever can accompany a **serious illness**.
- A **104.0°F** fever can occur with a **minor illness**.

The key to assessing the seriousness of the fever is how your child **acts**. Pay attention to their behavior and overall well-being.

TREATING FEVER

Fever can cause discomfort, aches, and irritability, but it can often be managed with fever-reducing medication. **Acetaminophen** (such as Tylenol) or, for children 6 months or older, **ibuprofen** (Advil or Motrin) can help reduce fever and make your child feel more comfortable. Keep in mind:

- Fever-reducing medications **won't cure the illness** or shorten its course; it only alleviates symptoms.
- Fever is a **symptom** of an illness, not the illness itself.

If your child has a fever but is otherwise acting normally and doesn't seem very sick, it may not be necessary to treat it with acetaminophen.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol) Dosing Chart

WEIGHT (pounds)	Infant or Children's syrup: 160mg/5mL	Chewable: 80mg tablets	Chewable: 160mg tablets	Adult: 325mg tablets	Adult: 500mg tablets
6-11 lbs	1.25 mL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
12-17 lbs	2.5 mL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
18-23 lbs	3.75 mL	1 ½ tabs	N/A	N/A	N/A
24-35 lbs	5 mL	2 tabs	1 tab	N/A	N/A
36-47 lbs	7.5 mL	3 tabs	1 ½ tabs	N/A	N/A
48-59 lbs	10 mL	4 tabs	2 tabs	1 tab	N/A
60-71 lbs	12.5 mL	5 tabs	2 ½ tabs	1 tab	N/A
72-95 lbs	15 mL	6 tabs	3 tabs	1 ½ tabs	1 tab
96+ lbs	20 mL	8 tabs	4 tabs	2 tabs	1 tab

** Acetaminophen can be given every 4-6 hours as needed. Do not give more than 5 times daily.

Ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) Dosing Chart

****DO NOT GIVE TO INFANTS YOUNGER THAN 6 MONTHS OLD**

WEIGHT (pounds)	Infant Drops: 50mg/1.25mL	Children's Liquid: 100mg/5mL	Chewable: 50mg tablets	Junior Strength: 100mg tablets	Adult: 200mg tablets
12-17 lbs	1.25 mL	2.5 mL	N/A	N/A	N/A
18-23 lbs	1.875 mL	4 mL	N/A	N/A	N/A
24-35 lbs	2.5 mL	5 mL	2 tabs	N/A	N/A
36-47 lbs	3.75 mL	7.5 mL	3 tabs	N/A	N/A
48-59 lbs	5 mL	10 mL	4 tabs	2 tabs	1 tab
60-71 lbs	N/A	12.5 mL	5 tabs	2 ½ tabs	1 tab
72-95 lbs	N/A	15 mL	6 tabs	3 tabs	1 ½ tabs
96+ lbs	N/A	20 mL	8 tabs	4 tabs	2 tabs

**Ibuprofen can be given every 6-8 hours as needed for children over 6 months old.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

You should call immediately if:

- Your child's temperature is **greater than or equal to 100.4°F** and they are **under 2 months old**.
- Your child is **crying inconsolably**.
- Your child is **difficult to awaken**.
- Your child has a **stiff neck**.
- You notice a **purple dot rash** on your child's skin.
- Your child has **difficulty breathing**.
- Your child looks or acts **very sick** (1–2 hours after giving acetaminophen).