

## **PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES OF SPRINGFIELD, INC.**

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### **YOUR CHILD'S FEVER**

Fever (rectal temperature greater than 100.4) is a common manifestation of infection or inflammation of any kind. Many studies now indicate fever is a helpful part of your child's response to infection so fever itself is not to be feared. Fever often begins around 3 to 4 PM and peaks about midnight to 2 AM. Most illnesses cause fever for 3-4 days, but some such as influenza or mononucleosis may cause fever to last longer.

There are many fever myths that are not true but still cause parents a great deal of anxiety. **Fever does not damage the brain unless it is higher than 107.** Except in very unusual circumstances (such as sunstroke or illicit drug exposure), the body's "thermostat" will prevent fevers from going higher than the body can handle. Only a small percentage of children will experience a seizure with fever and no harm is caused in that circumstance.

Fever may make your child uncomfortable but the degree of fever does not generally indicate the severity of the illness. It is possible to have a serious infection and relatively mild temperature elevations just as it is possible to have a very high temperature during a mild illness. It is not unusual for a child to run fevers as high as 105 with simple viral infections. Specific symptoms (such as a sore throat or diarrhea) and how a child acts (such as fussiness or pain) are more helpful than the degree of fever in evaluating a sick child.

**THERMOMETERS:** Rectal temperatures are the most accurate in young children. Digital thermometers are easy to use and read. Apply a small amount of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) to the tip and slip (do not push) just the silver tip into the rectum while your baby is lying on your lap. Hold the baby's legs firmly so he cannot buck or kick. Normal rectal temperature can be as high as 100.4. Ear thermometers and temporal scanners often read several degrees higher than rectal thermometers. Pacifier thermometers and "fever strips" are not recommended. When you call us about your sick child, please be prepared to report the actual temperature and how it was obtained. It is not necessary to add a degree to the reading.

**HOME CARE:** Keeping your child comfortable until the illness subsides is our goal. These measures include light clothing, plenty of fluids to drink, and fever medications (anti-pyretics). Activity is best determined by how a child feels – if the child feels like being out of bed, there is nothing to be gained by enforcing bed rest for simple infections. Eating will decrease and is not harmful for several days. Drinking, however, is important and must be encouraged. Adequate fluid intake will tend to keep the temperature lower. Clear fluids are beneficial, but milk is not harmful to a child with fever.

**FEVER MEDICINES:** Medications for fever will bring the high temperature down 1-2 degrees. Acetaminophen doses may be repeated every four hours as needed. Ibuprofen doses may be repeated every six to eight hours as needed. Please note: **Ibuprofen is not approved under six months of age. Giving a full dose of a second fever medication before the first one wears off has not been proven safe.** These medicines are dosed most accurately by weight, so our charts may differ from package charts that use age instead.

**Product names can be very confusing, so please double-check the active ingredient and concentration before using.** Beware of combination products that may lead to overdoses. Please keep all medication stored out of reach of children.

A valuable option when a child is vomiting or refusing to take fever medicine orally is the acetaminophen suppository. This product is available over the counter. Please call us if you need guidance on using this medication.

Aspirin is no longer recommended for children except in unusual circumstances.

*Acetaminophen Dosage Chart  
Every 4 hours as needed*

Weight (lbs.)	80 mg/0.8 ml	160 mg / 5 ml	Chewable Tablets 80 mg each	Chewable Tablets or Caplets 160 mg each
6-11 lbs.	0.4 ml	1.25 ml		
12-17 lbs.	0.8 ml	2.5 ml		
18-23 lbs.	1.2 ml	3.75 ml		
24-35 lbs.	1.6 ml	5 ml	2 Tablets	
36-47 lbs.	2.4 ml	7.5 ml	3 Tablets	
48-59 lbs.		10 ml	4 Tablets	2 Tablets or Caplets
60-71 lbs.		12.5 ml	5 Tablets	2 1/2 Tablets or Caplets
72-95 lbs.		15 ml	6 Tablets	3 Tablets or Caplets
96 lbs. & over				4 Tablets or Caplets

*Ibuprofen Dosage Chart  
Ages 6 months and up  
Every 6 hours as needed*

Weight (lbs.)	50 mg/1.25 ml	100 mg/ 5ml	Chewable Tablets 50 mg each	Chewable Tablets or Jr. Caplets 100 mg each	Adult 200 mg Caplet
10-17 lbs.	1.25 ml	2.5 ml			
18-23 lbs.	1.875 ml	3.75 ml			
24-35 lbs.	2.5 ml	5 ml	2 Tablets	1 Caplet	
36-47 lbs.		7.5 ml	3 Tablets	1 1/2 Caplets	
48-59 lbs.		10 ml	4 Tablets	2 Caplets	1 Caplet
60-71 lbs.		12.5 ml	5 Tablets	2 1/2 Caplets	1 Caplet
72-95 lbs.		15 ml	6 Tablets	3 Caplets	1 Caplet
96 + lbs.		20 ml	8 tablets	4 Caplets	2 Caplets

**APPOINTMENTS:** Young infants can sometimes have few symptoms other than fever during a serious illness, so we ask you to call us promptly if your infant (under three months old) has a rectal temperature greater than 100.4. After this age, please call us about any child who, after treating the fever, still seems quite ill to you. If your child is older than 3 months and seems reasonably comfortable, continue your fever control efforts. Call our office if the child is unusually irritable, refusing fluids, fever lasts more than four days, or if you are worried. A history of repeated episodes of fever

should be evaluated during regular office hours. Antibiotics are not prescribed over the phone, as they are not treatment for fever.