

Fever: When to Call the Pediatrician

When your baby has a fever, it is usually a sign that their body is fighting an illness or infection. Fevers are generally harmless. In fact, they can be a good sign that your child's immune system is working, and the body is trying to heal itself.



The most important things you can do when your child has a fever (</English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/default.aspx>):

- make sure they drink enough fluids to stay hydrated and
- watch for signs and symptoms (</English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/Signs-and-Symptoms-of-Fever.aspx>) of a serious illness.

It is a good sign if your child plays and interacts with you after receiving medicine for discomfort.

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Call your child's doctor right away if your child has a fever and:

- Looks very ill, is unusually drowsy, or is very fussy
- Has been in a very hot place (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Heat-Exposure-and-Reactions.aspx>), such as an overheated car
- Has other symptoms, such as a stiff neck, severe headache (</English/health-issues/conditions/head-neck-nervous-system/Pages/Headaches.aspx>), severe sore throat (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Sore-Throat.aspx>), severe ear pain, breathing difficulty, an unexplained rash (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Rash-Widespread-and-Cause-Unknown.aspx>), or repeated vomiting (</English/tips-tools/Symptom-Checker/Pages/Vomiting.aspx>) or diarrhea (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Diarrhea.aspx>)

- Has immune system problems, such as sickle cell disease or cancer (</English/health-issues/conditions/cancer/Pages/default.aspx>), or is taking steroids or other medicines that could affect their immune system
- Has heart problems that may affect how she tolerates a fever and increased heart rate as a result of the fever
- Has had a seizure (</English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Seizures.aspx>)
- Is younger than 3 months (12 weeks) and has a temperature of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or higher
- Temperature rises above 104°F (40°C) repeatedly for a child of any age

Also call your child's doctor if:

- Your child still "acts sick" once their fever is brought down.
- Your child seems to be getting worse.
- The fever persists for more than 24 hours in a child younger than 2 years.
- The fever persists for more than 3 days (72 hours) in a child 2 years of age or older.

Remember

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's health, ask your child's doctor.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.