

Fever in Children

The normal temperature of human body is 98.6°F. If the temperature is taken rectally, the thermometer will show a rise of 1°F, that is it will show 99.6°F. The normal body temperature can vary slightly among individuals. The doctors consider the rise in body temperature as fever if it crosses the mark of 99.4°F when taken orally and 100.4°F when taken rectally. Rectal checking of temperature is done in infants and children who are older than four years have their temperature checked orally. Infants under three months should be rushed to the hospital if they have fever above 100.5°F. The same applies for children older than three months and having a body temperature above 102°F.

Digital thermometers provide a more accurate temperature reading. Mercury thermometers pose a health risk to the family as it is an environmental toxin. Hence, this is another good reason why mercury thermometers should be replaced with digital thermometers. Parents must take few measures before and during the task of checking the child's temperature. First of all, the parent should be sure about the kind of thermometer he or she wants to use, that is whether the thermometer should be meant for oral use or rectal use. The child shouldn't be bundled up very tightly before the temperature is checked. When the thermometer is being held by the child, the parent should supervise the whole procedure. Infants might experience pain when the thermometer is inserted into his rectum. Therefore, it is a good idea to cover the thermometer's tip with petroleum jelly before insertion and only half of the thermometer should be inserted inside. The thermometer should be held until the beep is heard as children tend to drop the thermometer, if it is left to them. When taking the temperature orally, the thermometer should be placed underneath the tongue and should be left there until the beep is heard. After usage, the thermometer should be washed with cold water and soap.

When an infection is being fought by the body, it shows signs of fever. When the child becomes fussy and experiences aches in parts of the body, the child should be administered with some medicines. Medicines are available for children, depending on their needs, age and weight. The recommended dosage will be written on the pack or the label of the medicine and the parents should check that chart before giving any medicine to the child. If there is any kind of confusion, a doctor should always be consulted. Medicines like Acetaminophen, Ibuprofen, and Tylenol for children are available over the counter. When acetaminophen is given along with lukewarm bath, it helps decrease the fever. The medicine should be given just before the bath. The water shouldn't be cold and no alcohol products must be used while bathing. If bath is given minus acetaminophen, the child can begin to shiver and there is chance of body temperature going high again.

Aspirin is not advisable for children as it may develop serious illness called

Reye's syndrome in the child. The risk is even more in kids having chickenpox or flu. Not more than five doses should be given in twenty four hours. If drops are given, the dropper should be filled till the marked line. A liquid medicine usually comes with a measuring device in the form of a cap. If not, it can be bought at the local drug store. Infants under four months shouldn't be given medicine, unless told by the doctor.

Certain symptoms call for immediate attention and the doctor must be contacted immediately. Symptoms can be dry mouth, rapid change in body temperature, ear-ache, behavioral changes, frequent diarrhea and vomiting, paleness, seizures, skin rashes, intense headaches, sore throat, swollen joints, irritability, high pitch crying, not feeling hungry, stiff neck, stomach ache, whimpering, wheezing, limpness, and breathing problems. At all times, the child must be made to wear comfortable cotton cloths which help the body to breath properly and at the same time absorbs the sweat. The child should also be given fluids constantly, in order to combat with dehydration.

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