



FEVER

What is fever?

- Fever is a symptom, not a disease. Fever turns on the body's immune system and is one of the body's protective mechanisms. Most fevers are good for people and help the body fight infection. Normal body temperature changes throughout the day, usually peaking in the late afternoon and evening. Rectal temperatures are higher than oral temperatures.

Range of fevers

- 100-102 degrees Low-grade fevers are beneficial. Try to keep the fever in this range.
- 102-104 degrees Moderate-grade fevers are beneficial.
- > 104 degrees High fevers cause discomfort, but are harmless.
- > 105 degrees Risk of bacterial infections increased with very high fevers.
- > 108 degrees The fever itself may be harmful.

Treatment

- Fevers only need to be treated only if they cause discomfort, usually over 102 degrees.
- Treatment with fever reducing medication brings the fever down 2-3 degrees, but it will then fluctuate back up.
- Even without treatment, fevers rarely exceed 105-106 degrees because of the body's regulating system.
- Encourage extra fluids.
- Remove extra clothing.
- Acetaminophen or ibuprofen products may be used to decrease discomfort if the child's fever is over 101 degrees.

Are there complications?

- Febrile seizures are uncommon in most children and are not harmful.
- Body temperatures over 108 degrees can cause brain damage. The body temperature goes this high with high environmental temperatures (i.e. confined in a closed car).

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information, call your health care provider.