

FAST FEVER FACTS

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3 WAYS TO TREAT IT



FLUIDS

Offer plenty of kid-friendly fluids and cool foods (water, juice, Popsicles, etc.) to keep her hydrated.



LIGHT CLOTHES

Overdressing or layering too many blankets can trap heat around your feverish kid's body. Dress her in light layers to help lower her body temperature.



MEDICATIONS

Often the best reason for giving medicine is not to reduce fever, but to ease the aches that come with it. If your kid has a fever but is behaving like she normally does, you may want to wait it out. For fever treatment in babies older than six months (consult your doctor between three and six months), use acetaminophen (Tempra, Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).

Alternating them is a bit controversial—some docs say to pick (and stick) with one medication that works best for your kid. Other experts say switching between acetaminophen and ibuprofen every three hours is a safe and effective way to treat stubborn high fevers.

WHAT IS IT?

Fever isn't a sickness in itself; it's a symptom of illness. It's the immune system's way of attacking intruders, like a bacterial or viral infection, by driving up body temperature to make them uncomfortable. Fevers are most often caused by viruses and typically clear up on their own, within three days. Also, the degree of fever does not necessarily correlate to the severity of the illness. The Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) says normal body temperature is typically 37°C (98.6°F) and that fever qualifies as a temperature of 38°C (100°F) or greater.

AGE BY AGE

BABIES SIX MONTHS OR YOUNGER: should be seen by their doctor during a fever.

CHILDREN OLDER THAN SIX MONTHS: can be treated at home with plenty of fluids as long as they seem well otherwise. If the fever persists beyond three days, the CPS says they should be seen by their doctor.

SEE A DOCTOR IF YOUR CHILD IS: younger than six months old; excessively sleepy, lethargic or unresponsive; is persistently wheezing or coughing; has a fever and a rash or any other signs that worry you.

HOW NOT TO TREAT IT

- Do not use glass mercury thermometers or fever strips. The former is breakable and contains a toxic substance, while the latter does not provide accurate results.
- Never use ASA (acetylsalicylic acid) as it has been linked to Reye's Syndrome, a serious, sometimes fatal, illness that affects children with viral infections.
- Skip the cool or lukewarm baths—they can actually raise instead of lower body temperature by causing your child to shiver, says the CPS.

THERMOMETER GUIDE

HOW IT WORKS

Made of unbreakable plastic with a metal sensor tip, this one is a multi-tasker and can be used for oral or rectal temperature-taking, as well as under the armpit. Be sure to sanitize after each use and keep separate thermometers for oral and rectal temperature.



Digital stick

This method is fast, gentle and easy to use without disturbing your little one.



Digital ear

The latest gadget in the thermometer game, this type is fast and easy. Using infrared technology, it scans the temperature of the temporal artery in the forehead.



Temporal artery

HOW TO USE

ARMPIT: Place the thermometer in the centre of your kid's armpit, tuck arm snugly against body and hold in place.

MOUTH: Place the tip of the thermometer under your kid's tongue and close lips around it.

RECTUM: Cover the silver tip with petroleum jelly and gently insert 2.5 cm (1 inch), holding in place with your fingers.

Gently tug on the ear, pulling it back to help make a clear path inside to the eardrum. Using a clean probe, carefully insert thermometer until ear canal is fully sealed off. A snug seal means it's in properly. Hold in place.

It simply needs to be touched to the forehead to scan temperature, while other models have a no-touch feature that reads temperature from up to 5 cm away—ideal for sneaking a temp check while they're sleeping.

AGES IT'S BEST FOR

From birth to five years, the CPS recommends rectum for the most accurate reading, but armpit ranks second best. Oral isn't recommended for children younger than five years old, as it's hard for them to hold it under their tongue for long enough.

Between two and five years old, the ear is second choice to rectum for accuracy, according to the CPS.

Since this technology is still new, there's no clear consensus as to best age group; many manufacturers say it can be used for a child at any age.