

Fever Guide

When to Call Your Child's Doctor

The following guidelines apply to otherwise healthy children who are up-to-date on routine childhood immunizations. If your child has a complex chronic medical condition or is behind on routine immunizations, please call your child's doctor for medical advice specific to your child's illness.

Infants younger than 3 months (12 weeks)

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher – **Call the doctor immediately**

Children 3–24 months of age

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher for 24 hours – Call the doctor during office hours
- If your child looks very ill, is not responding to your voice, is extremely sleepy or difficult to wake – **Call the doctor immediately**

Children 2 years and older

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher for 72 hours (3 days) – Call the doctor during office hours
- If your child looks very ill, is not responding to your voice, is extremely sleepy or difficult to wake – **Call the doctor immediately**



A fever is one of the body's normal responses to help fight an infection. It is not dangerous. When your child has a fever, the way they act is often more important than their body temperature, even if the temperature is high. Pay attention to the symptoms your child is experiencing along with the fever. Typical symptoms during a fever include a faster heart rate and breathing, chills, body aches, fussiness and a poor appetite.

If your child is alert, is making eye contact with you, responding to your voice, or even playing, use the following guidelines for treatment at home:

- **Use fever-reducing medicine for pain and discomfort.**
 - Give acetaminophen (Tylenol® or store brand) or ibuprofen (Motrin® or store brand). Do NOT give ibuprofen to children less than 6 months old. Do NOT give medicine to infants less than 3 months old unless directed by your child's doctor.
 - Do NOT alternate ibuprofen and acetaminophen to treat fever unless recommended by your child's doctor.
 - Never give aspirin to a child.
- **Offer plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.**

See reverse side for signs and symptoms of more serious illness.

Call the doctor immediately if your child:

- Shows signs of dehydration (urinating less than once every 8 hours, not producing tears when crying, dryness of the tongue or inside the mouth, sleepy or difficult to wake)
- Has other symptoms such as an unexplained rash, repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Has chronic health problems such as a heart condition, lung disease or a weakened immune system

Go to the Emergency Department if your child:

- Looks very ill or is unusually hard to wake up
- Is extremely fussy or irritable and cannot be comforted
- Is an infant and the soft spot on their head is sunken in or bulging out
- Has a stiff neck or severe headache
- Has a new purple rash or new bruising on their skin
- Has a seizure
- Has trouble breathing that does not improve with nose suction (pulling in at ribs, breathing fast or hard, wheezing, grunting, has blue lips, tongue or nails)
- Has severe abdominal pain

For any other symptoms, call your child's doctor during office hours to schedule an appointment.

Cincinnati Children's Emergency Services

Cincinnati Children's has two emergency department locations open 24/7:



Burnet Campus Emergency Department
513-636-4200
3401 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229

Liberty Campus Emergency Department
513-636-3200
7777 Yankee Road, Building A
Liberty Township, OH 45044

** This is a general guide to help parents make healthcare decisions for their children. This guidance applies to otherwise healthy children who are up-to-date on routine childhood immunizations. If your child has a complex chronic medical condition or is behind on routine immunizations, please call your child's doctor for medical advice specific to your child's illness.*