

A Child with a Fever



Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford City Clinical Commissioning Group
Bradford Districts Clinical Commissioning Group

Information for parents and carers

What is a fever?

A temperature greater than **37.5°C** is a fever. It can be very worrying for parents to note that their child has a temperature, but it is very common and can settle without any treatment.

Your child may have a fever if they:

- feel hotter than usual when you touch their forehead, back or stomach;
- feel sweaty or clammy;
- have flushed cheeks.

Causes of fever

Fevers can be caused by infection, but it can also be because of teething and after vaccinations. The temperature helps to fight the infection by preventing bacteria and viruses from surviving.

Common infections include:

- Ear infections;
- Viral respiratory tract;
- Tonsillitis;
- Chicken pox.

Measuring temperature

If you have a thermometer at home and have measured your child's temperature make a note of this and the time.

If your child is under 3 months of age and has a temperature of **38°C** or aged between 3-6 months and has a temperature of **39°C**, you need to seek urgent medical advice.

How to lower a fever

Fluids

A child has a fever can be at risk of becoming dehydrated. It is important to give them plenty of water regularly. Babies should be given plenty of fluids - breast or formula milk is best.

Clothing

- Make sure they are dressed appropriately for their surroundings.
- Undress to nappy/ pants.
- Try to keep your child comfortable, so if the environment is warm, it helps to cover them with a lightweight sheet or opening a window.
- Sponging your child with cool water isn't recommended to reduce a fever.

Medicines

Medicines such as Calpol (paracetamol) and ibuprofen can lower a temperature. Always only give the recommended dosage for your child's age as it states on the box. If your child is not distressed by the fever, it is not always necessary to give these.

Signs of dehydration

- Reduced wet nappies
- Dry lips/ mouth
- Sunken eyes
- No tears
- Sunken soft spot on baby's head
- Overall appearance

Always remember

- Your child's urine should be pale yellow - any darker could mean they are dehydrated.
- To always check your child during the night.
- Do not give ibuprofen if your child is dehydrated.

When should I get advice?

Contact your GP if:

- your baby is under three months old and they have a temperature of 38°C (101F) or higher
- your baby is three to six months old and has a temperature of 39°C (102F) or higher
- you think your child may be dehydrated
- your child develops a red rash that doesn't fade when a glass is rolled over it
- your child is inconsolable and doesn't stop crying, or has a high-pitched or unusual sound when crying
- the fever hasn't improved within 48 hours
- your child's health is getting worse
- you have any concerns about looking after your child at home

Contact NHS 111 if you need advice out of hours.

Dial 999 for an ambulance if:

- Your child is having a lot of difficulty breathing and is pale or sweaty
- Your child has a fit (convulsion)
- Your child is drowsy or unresponsive