

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FEVER

DEFINITION

A Fever is a rise of body temperature above normal. Fever is a part of the healing process and is a physiological response of the body. Fever can occur for several reasons: infection, injury, drug reaction, and certain diagnoses i.e. cancer. Remember, the body does need to do it's job.

CAUSES AND EXPECTED COURSE

Fever is a symptom, not a disease. Fever turns on the body's immune system. In general, the height of the fever does not relate to the seriousness of the illness. How sick the child acts is what counts. The usual fevers (101-105 degrees F) that all children get are not harmful. Most fevers with viral illnesses can last for 2-3 days. Generally, fever causes no permanent harm until it reaches 107 degrees F. However, if you are worried, please call for assistance

BODY TEMPERATURES

Guidelines for temperatures are as follows:

- 97-99 degrees F - physiologically normal
- 101-102 degrees F - flood the fever; water it! Increase fluids by mouth and may use Tylenol for comfort measures.
- 103-105 degrees F - considered a moderate fever. Patient may not be consolable. Shaking or trembling could occur. Use Tylenol for temperature.
- 105-107 degrees F - considered a high fever. Hallucinations may occur. Use Tylenol for fever.
- Higher than 107 degrees F - when fever elevates to this point, this is the only time the fever is truly dangerous due to damage it can cause the kidneys.

Oral temperatures can be affected by drinking cold or hot liquids.

Axillary temperatures can be affected by perspiration and generally can vary 1-2 degrees than oral temperatures.

Rectal temperatures are normally 1 degree higher than oral. Rectal temperatures are not warranted on all patients. However, this is the most accurate temperature because it is the closest measurement of core body temperature.

Ear temperatures are closer in proximity to accuracy in measuring temperature. This ear is not affected by drinking hot or cold liquids or perspiration, but this method may have a variation in the degree of the temperature.

TREATMENT OF FEVER

Treat all Fevers with Extra Fluids and Less Clothing. Encourage your child to drink extra fluids. Popsicles, cool drinks, and sorbets are all helpful. Avoid mild and other dairy products. Body fluids are lost during fevers because of sweating.

Tylenol (acetaminophen) Products for Reducing Fever. Acetaminophen is the drug of choice for controlling fever. Use Tylenol ONLY for treatment of fever. Use drugs only if the fever is over 102 degrees F and preferably only if your child is also uncomfortable. Give the correct dosage for your child's weight every 4-6 hours. Medicine does not bring the temperature down to normal unless the temperature was not very elevated before the medicine was given. Do not use aspirin products with fever.

Keep child cool. Use diapers only or undershirt and underwear at home. Clothing should be kept to a minimum and do not bundle up your child. Use only a sheet or light blanket if needed. Keep the room COOL.

Sponge baths. Set your child in a tub of tepid water. DO NOT USE ALCOHOL. Sponge water over back and front for at least 30 minutes. Expect crying. DO NOT stop if this happens. DO NOT give enemas.