



Washington University Clinical Associates

FEVER FACTS

Fever is the body's normal, regulated response to an infection. It is an elevation of normal body temperature. Because normal core body temperature varies among individuals and at different times of day, it is difficult to use a single number to define fever for everyone.

The most commonly used definition of fever in children is 100.4 (rectal).

Measure temperature with a digital thermometer. Do not use fever strips. Do not use tympanic (ear) thermometers in infants under 20 lbs.

- **FACT:** For children 3 months or younger with rectal temperature 100.4 or higher, call your physician's office immediately.
- **FACT:** Children 3-6 months with a fever for longer than 24 hours should be seen by a doctor or nurse practitioner.
- **FACT:** Older children with a fever lasting longer than 3 days should be examined.
- **FACT:** Antibiotics do not treat a fever.
- **FACT:** Children should not be given aspirin because of the possible association with Reyes Syndrome.
- **FACT:** Fever is a symptom, not an illness.

WHAT TO DO FOR A FEVER

- Dress cool with minimum layers of clothing.
- Do not put blankets on an infant/child with fever.
- Offer clear, cool drinks like Gatorade, fruit juice, clear soda or popsicles.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) for discomfort. Refer to our dosage charts for appropriate dosing.
- Always double check the MILLIGRAM dose since there are different concentrations of these medications available.
- **Always call our office if you are not clear on how much of these medicines to give: Wentzville: 636-332-6663; St. Charles: 636-441-7280; Florissant: 314-837-0405.**
- Do not alternate acetaminophen with ibuprofen unless instructed to do so by your physician.