

Lamoille Health Partners Pediatric Fever FAQs

Does my child have a fever?

A fever is a body temperature higher than 100.4°F (38.0°C). Temperatures lower than this but higher than 98.6°F (37°C) are normal temperature variations, not “low grade fevers”. You cannot tell if you or your child has a fever without a thermometer.

Why do children get fevers?

Fever helps us fight infections. It helps our immune cells work better and weakens invading viruses and bacteria. Fevers are typically more harmful to the infections they are fighting than they are to us.

When should I worry about my child's fever?

For **children under 3 months old** a fever can be a sign of serious illness. A child under 3 months old with a temperature greater than 100.4°F (38.0°C) should always see their healthcare provider. You should call us if your infant has a fever when they are less than 3 months old.



Fever by itself is no reason for alarm. A higher fever does not mean the infection is more serious. There is no specific number that is “too high” or requires a trip to the emergency room. You should worry and call your health care provider if your child is unusually drowsy, fussy, showing other severe symptoms, or looking dehydrated. See your healthcare provider if a fever lasts more than 3 days.

Does a fever always have to be treated with medication?

No. Treating a fever does not help our bodies recover from illness faster. In fact, studies have shown lowering fever might make infections worse.¹

How do I manage my child's fever?

Keep them comfortable. Avoid over or under dressing. Push extra fluids to avoid dehydration. Water, soup, ice pops, and Jell-o are all good choices. Avoid drinks with caffeine which can worsen dehydration by increasing urination. Sport drinks like Gatorade are not better than water and their added sugars can make diarrhea worse for younger children.



¹ Evol Med Public Health 2021;9(1):26-35

When should I medicate my child for a fever?

If the fever is extremely uncomfortable you may choose to treat it with acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

We do not recommend taking aspirin for a fever due to its association with a rare serious condition called Reye syndrome. Do not give acetaminophen to children less than 12 weeks old. Do not give ibuprofen to children under 6 months old. To avoid dosing confusion, pick one medication and stick with it rather than alternating the two.

Refer to the following dosing table when choosing a dose for a child. Dose should be **based upon weight** rather than age.

Acetaminophen						Ibuprofen					
If your child weighs	Give this dose	Infant Drops Or liquid 160mg/5ml	Chewable tablets 80 mg/tab	Jr tablets 160 mg/tab	Adult tablets 325 mg/tab	If your child weighs	Give this dose	Infant drops 50 mg/1.25 ml	Children's Liquid 100 mg/5 ml	Chewable Tablets 50 mg/tab	Jr Tablets 100 mg/tab
6-11 lbs	40 mg	1.25 ml				6-11 lbs					
12-17 lbs	80 mg	2.5 ml				12-17 lbs	50 mg	1.25 ml	2.5 ml		
18-23 lbs	120 mg	3.75 ml				18-23 lbs	75 mg	1.875 ml	3.75 ml		
24-35 lbs	160 mg	5 ml	2 tablets			24-35 lbs	100 mg	2.5 ml	5 ml	2 tabs	1 tablet
36-47 lbs	240 mg	7.5 ml	3 tablets			36-47 lbs	150 mg		7.5 ml	3 tabs	1 ½ tab
48-59 lbs	320 mg	10 ml	4 tablets	2 tablets	1 tablet	48-59 lbs	200 mg		10 ml	4 tabs	2 tabs
60-71 lbs	400 mg	12.5 ml	5 tablets	2 ½ tablets	1 tablet	60-71 lbs	250 mg		12.5 ml	5 tabs	2 ½ tabs
72-95 lbs	480 mg	15 ml	6 tablets	3 tablets	1 tablet	72-95 lbs	300 mg		15 ml	6 tabs	3 tabs
95 lbs and up	650 mg				2 tablets	95 lbs and up	400 mg				4 tabs

You can give **Acetaminophen** every **4 hours**

You can give **Ibuprofen** every **6 hours**

We do not recommend using over-the-counter cough and cold medicines for children. They have no benefit and can cause harmful side effects. Cough and cold medicines may contain acetaminophen and/or ibuprofen which can lead to accidentally overdosing these medications.



Keep all medications out of reach of children. If your child takes too much, call us, or call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 immediately!

Understanding the MYTHS about fevers:

- Fevers **do not** cause brain damage.
- Four percent of children can have a febrile seizure with a fever. Febrile seizures are scary to watch but usually stop within 5 minutes and have no long-term effects. Treating fevers **does not** stop febrile seizures from happening.
- You do not always have to treat a fever. You can let the fever do its job.²

² [Fever - Myths Versus Facts \(seattlechildrens.org\)](http://seattlechildrens.org)