

Fever

Higher-than-normal body temperature



Signs

- Baby feels warm or hot to the touch.
- Baby's head may be sweaty and the face may be flushed or pale.
- Baby may not eat or sleep as usual.
- Baby may be less active or can be fussy.



What to Know

- A baby has a fever if his or her temperature is:
 - Axillary [armpit] 98.6° F (37.0° C) or higher
 - Rectally 100.4° F (38.0° C) or higher
- A fever is the body's normal response to infections and plays a role in fighting them by activating the body's immune system.
- Everyone's temperature normally fluctuates during the day, due to exercise, excessive clothing, a hot bath or hot weather.
- Fevers may be caused by viral or bacterial illness.
- Teething rarely causes a fever; if it does, the fever is seldom higher than 101° F.
- It is important to check manufacturer's recommendations regarding age and usage for tympanic/electronic (digital) thermometers.
- Tympanic thermometer readings may not be accurate in infants younger than 3 months of age.

- The preferred way to take the temperature of an infant is axillary.



What to Do

- Since a fever may be the first sign of illness, watch your infant for other signs.
- If your baby feels warm, take his or her temperature; follow the guidelines of your health-care provider about how to take a temperature.
- If your baby has a fever but does not appear ill, try removing a layer of clothing and recheck the temperature in one-half to one hour.

How to take an axillary [armpit] temperature:

- Place the tip of the thermometer in a dry armpit.
- Close the armpit by holding the elbow against the chest for five minutes.

Treating a fever at home:

- Offer your baby plenty of fluids.
- For fevers of 100° to 102° F, more fluids and less clothing may be the only treatment necessary.
- Notify your baby's health-care provider before giving a medicine to reduce fever. Remember that fevers help your baby's body fight the infection.
- Do not give aspirin to your baby without consulting your health-care provider. Aspirin use in children has been associated with Reye's Syndrome, a severe illness.

Continued on back page

- Sponging a baby is usually not necessary to reduce the fever; however, if fever-reducing medication does not work within one-half hour, you may choose to sponge your baby. Sponge the baby with lukewarm water. If your baby shivers, stop sponging or increase the temperature of the water.



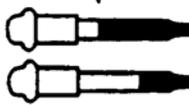
When to Call Your Health-care Provider

- If your baby looks or acts very sick or is crying inconsolably or whimpering.
- If your baby is younger than 3 months old and has a fever.
- The fever is higher than 101° F in babies older than 3 months of age.
- If your baby is difficult to awaken or has a decrease in normal activity.
- If your baby has a stiff neck and cries if you touch him or her.

- If your baby has rapid, noisy or difficult breathing.
- If your baby has a poor appetite or has repeated vomiting or diarrhea.
- If your baby shows signs of dehydration:
 - Four or fewer wet diapers in 24 hours
 - Dry mouth
 - Sunken eyes
 - Sunken soft spot on head (fontanel)
 - Extreme irritability
 - Listlessness (decreased activity)
 - Possibly no tears
- If there are any changes in the appearance of the skin, such as yellowing, purple blotches/spots or a rash.
- If the fever has been present more than 72 hours or went away for 24 hours and then returned.
- If your baby is fussy and appears to have burning or pain with urination.
- If your baby has unusual behaviors (*trust your feelings*).

Acetaminophen Dosage Guide

Dose of Acetaminophen* to be given every 4-6 hours

< 12 pounds	12-17 pounds	18-23 pounds	24-35 pounds	36-47 pounds
1/2 dropper of drops 	1 dropper of drops  or 1/2 teaspoon of elixir (syrup) 	1 + 1/2 droppers of drops  or 3/4 teaspoon of elixir (syrup) 	1 teaspoon of elixir (syrup)  or 2 chewable tablets 	1 + 1/2 teaspoons of elixir (syrup)  or 3 chewable tablets 

*Examples of Acetaminophen are Tylenol, Panadol, Tempra and Liquiprin. Do not give aspirin.



North Dakota Department of Health

1.800.472.2286

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth/MCH/babyfacts/Fever.pdf>

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