BABY FACT SHEET

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.

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

- 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 inconstantly 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dose of Acetaminophen* to be given every 4-6 hours</th>
<th>&lt; 12 pounds</th>
<th>12-17 pounds</th>
<th>18-23 pounds</th>
<th>24-35 pounds</th>
<th>36-47 pounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2 dropper of drops</td>
<td>1 dropper of drops</td>
<td>1 + 1/2 droppers of drops</td>
<td>1 teaspoon of elixir (syrup)</td>
<td>1 + 1/2 teaspoons of elixir (syrup)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or 1/2 teaspoon of elixir (syrup)</td>
<td>or 3/4 teaspoon of elixir (syrup)</td>
<td>or 2 chewable tablets</td>
<td>or 3 chewable tablets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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