



The ABCs of Fever



Fever often puts fear in the minds of parents. Here are some guidelines to help determine when your child needs to be seen by a doctor or taken to the emergency room.

What temperature is considered high enough to take your child to the emergency room?

- Typically, a child with fever of 105° or higher should be evaluated by a physician.
- Also, *any fever* (temperature 100.4 or more) occurring in infants below three months of age as well as *any fever* in children who are known to have a poorly functioning immune system (examples include sickle cell disease and children receiving chemotherapy), needs to be evaluated by a physician.

Within the usual range of fever (below 105) the thermometer is a very poor indicator of how ill or well a child may be. Instead, parents should evaluate their child by using the ABCs of Fever.

A – What is your child’s activity level? If they have fever, but are still active, playful, happy or smiling – this is very reassuring. Call your physician if your child is listless or seems uninterested in what’s taking place around him or her. Often, at this point, your physician will recommend appropriate fever medication, oral fluids, and then re-evaluation.

B – Monitor your child’s breathing. If your child has to work to breath or their breathing is rapid, call your doctor or bring your child to the emergency room.

C – Evaluate your child’s color, or circulation. Is his or her color normal or is his or her skin pale or gray? If so, call your doctor or bring your child to the emergency room.

Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids. Children younger than one year of age need electrolyte solutions such as *Pedialyte*. Electrolyte replacement in older children can be provided by sports drinks.

Rarely, a child with fever may have a seizure, which is normally not harmful to the child and is usually a single episode. If a seizure occurs, contact your physician for advice or seek evaluation in the emergency department.