

Fever in children over 5 years



This advice is intended for parents/carers taking their child home after consulting a doctor. Your doctor may recommend different treatments depending on your child's condition.

This advice is for parent and carers of children over 5 years of age who have a fever where we may not know the cause.

About fever in children

- Your child has a fever if they have a temperature of 38°C or more.
- Fever is common in children and suggests that your child may have an infection.
- Most children with a fever do get better very quickly but some children can get worse. You need to regularly check your child during the day and through the night and follow the advice given below.

What causes fever in children?

- The most common reason for your child to have a fever is a viral infection. Viral infections usually get better on their own and do not need treatment.
- Some fevers are caused by bacterial infections. Antibiotics can be needed to treat bacterial infections.
- Fever can also be common up to 48 hours after some childhood immunisations.
- Fever can sometimes be due to an inflammatory disorder and is not caused by infection.

How can I look after my child?

- It is important to give your child plenty of fluids (drinks).
- If your child is vomiting (being sick), give them small drinks more often as this is more likely to stay down. Make sure you offer them some sugary drinks if they are not eating.
- Watch your child for signs of dehydration. See the amber section of the table below 'When Should I get Help' for signs of dehydration in your child.
- To get medical advice call your GP or phone NHS 111
- Do not under or over wrap your child with clothes or blankets
- Your child should not go to school while they have a fever. You should also let your school or nursery know about your child's fever.
- Do not try to bring your child's fever down with tepid (cool) sponging or fans.

Which medicines can I use?

- If your child is distressed with their fever, you can consider giving them paracetamol (Calpol) or ibuprofen. Give one medicine at a time. If your child has not improved after 2-3 hours you can consider giving the other medicine.
- Some children should not have ibuprofen, for example, children with chicken pox. If you do not know whether you should give your child ibuprofen, ask your doctor.
- Follow the instructions on the medicine bottle to know how much to give and how often.
- If your child has had too much medicine or takes it too often it can be harmful.
- Call NHS 111 if you think your child has taken too much medicine.



- Do not give paracetamol or ibuprofen to babies under three months of age unless your doctor has told you to.
- Ask your local pharmacist if you need more help and advice about medicines for your child

How long can a fever last?

- Most fevers caused by a viral infection will get better after 2-3 days. Symptoms should gradually improve
- However, how long a fever lasts will depend on what is causing the fever


When should I get help?

Use this table to help you know what to do if your child is unwell

 <p>RED</p>	<p>If your child has any of these signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child is pale, mottled (blotchy) skin or feels cold to touch • Your child has blue lips • Your child is finding it very hard to breathe- your child is too breathless to talk, eat or drink • Your child has a fit / seizure • Your child is confused, your child is hard to wake up or your child cannot stay awake • Your child has a rash that does not go away when you press on it (see 'The Glass Test' below) • Your child has a severe headache that is not going away, your child has neck stiffness (doesn't want to move their neck/head) and/or your child doesn't want to be in a room with the lights on 	<p>You need help now Go to the nearest Hospital Emergency Department or phone 999</p>
 <p>AMBER</p>	<p>If your child has any of these signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child is finding it hard to breathe • Your child has signs of dehydration including: sunken eyes, dry mouth, no tears when crying or has not passed urine (had a wee) for 12 hours. • Your child has swelling of an arm or leg or joint • Your child finds it too painful to stand up on their own 	<p>You should speak to a doctor or nurse today Call your GP surgery or NHS 111 - dial 111</p>

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Content adapted with permission from the [what0-18.nhs.uk](https://www.what0-18.nhs.uk) resource produced by the Healthier Together initiative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your child is drowsy (very sleepy), or is irritable – especially if your child is still like this after their fever settles • Your child is shivering a lot or has muscle pain • Your child has a fever of 38.0°C or above for more than 5 days • Your child was starting to improve, and the fever settled but the fever returns within the same illness • Your child has a fever within 2 days of stopping antibiotics • Your child is getting worse, or you are worried 	
 GREEN	If your child has none of the above signs.	Self-care You can keep looking after your child at home. If you are still concerned call NHS 111

Rashes and Fever – The Glass Test



(Photo and 'Glass Test' courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation 2013)

Information from Meningitis Research Foundation

<https://www.meningitis.org/blogs/what-is-the-meningitis-rash>

Many people are familiar with the so-called “tumbler test” or “glass test”, whereby a glass or other clear surface is pressed onto the rash. If it disappears when pressed, this is known as a **blanching** rash. The meningitis “rash” can start as a blanching rash, but nearly always develops into a **non-blanching** red, purple or brownish petechial rash or purpura, meaning it will not disappear when pressed.