

Caring for your child when they have a fever

Children's Emergency Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Your child has been assessed in the Children's Emergency Department and we think that they are well enough to go home. This leaflet will give you further advice on caring for your child at home.

When should I seek help?

Please telephone your GP or the NHS helpline on 111 if your child:

- gets worse.
- **is under 3 months of age and their fever goes above 38°C.**
- has a fit.
- develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see the 'tumbler test' section in this leaflet).
- has a fever that lasts longer than 5 days.
- is breathless or it is taking them extra effort to breathe.
- is floppy or drowsy.

You should also seek help if:

- you are worried.
- you have concerns about looking after your child at home.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What is a fever?

- Fever is when your child's temperature goes above 38°C.
- It is usually a sign of infection in the body and can be caused by a virus or bacterial infection. Only bacterial infections can be treated with antibiotics.
- The height of the fever **does not** reflect the seriousness of the illness. Fever actually helps the body fight the infection.
- There is no advantage in lowering the fever, except to make your child more comfortable.
- Reducing the temperature **will not** prevent a fit which can occur due to a fever (febrile convulsion).
- A fever **does not** cause damage to the brain or other organs.

Do I need to give medicine to bring down the fever?

- Only give medicine if your child is distressed; aim to treat your child and not the number.
- If you do need to give medicine, you can give paracetamol at the recommended dose.
- If after 2 to 3 hours your child has not improved you can try ibuprofen.
- **Do not** give the medicines at the same time for fever.
- **Do not** go over the recommended daily dose. Make sure you read the instructions on the packet.

Your local pharmacist can give you more advice about medicines for children.

How should I dress my child when they have a fever?

- Children with a fever should not be under or over dressed.
- If your child is shivering or sweating a lot, change the amount of clothes they are wearing.
- Avoid over heating rooms and allow air to circulate.
- **Do not** sponge your child with water. This does not help to reduce a fever.

When should I check on my child?

- Check your child during the night for rashes and to see if they are getting better. If a rash appears, do the tumbler test (see the next page).
- Keep your child away from nursery or school while they have a fever. Let the nursery or school know about your child's illness.

What else should I look out for?

Give your child regular drinks (diluted juice or squash) to keep them well hydrated. When a baby is breastfed, breast milk is the best fluid to give them.

Look out for signs of dehydration which include:

- sunken soft spot on a baby's head (fontanelle).
- dry mouth.
- sunken eyes.
- no tears when crying.
- being irritated or feeling tired or weak.

If you find signs of dehydration encourage your child to drink more fluids and seek further advice if you are worried.

Doing a tumbler test when your child has a rash

The 'tumbler test' needs to be done if your child has a rash:

- Press a glass tumbler firmly against the rash.
- If you can see the spots through the glass and they **do not** fade this is called a 'non-blanching rash'. If this kind of rash is present seek medical advice **immediately**.
- Rashes are harder to see on dark skin so check paler areas, such as palms of the hands, soles of the feet, tummy and inside the eyelids.



Key points

- A normal temperature range is up to 38°C.
- Fever is common in children.
- If your child seems well and is happy, there is no need to treat a fever.
- **If your child is under 3 months and has a fever above 38°C, take them to a doctor to be checked.**
- If your child is miserable because of the fever, treatment can be given to comfort your child. Give fluids and paracetamol. Their temperature may not return to normal but your child will hopefully feel less distressed.
- Keep monitoring your child for signs of the illness getting worse.

Contact details

If you have any concerns you can contact the NHS helpline on 111 for advice.

Giving us your feedback

We would love to get some feedback on your visit today. Use your smart phone to scan this QR code for quick access to our online feedback survey form.

Alternatively, you can access the feedback form from our website:

<https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/patients/thinking-of-choosing-us/patient-experience/>



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على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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