

Pediatric Associates of NYC

FEVER

Many parents are fearful of fever. Fever is a very normal and natural part of our immune response to illness and can have a beneficial effect in slowing the growth of bacteria and viruses. Fever is a symptom, not a primary illness, and is not dangerous to healthy children

- Fever is when the temperature of the body rises. Normal body temperature ranges from 97.9-100.3 F
- Fever is usually a sign of infection in the body. Fever is often caused by a virus and sometimes by a bacterial infection.
- Viral infections are far more common and do not need antibiotics. Bacterial infections are treated with antibiotics.
- Most viral fevers last 3-5 days
- A higher fever does not necessarily mean your child has a more serious illness. The fever seen in common childhood infections is not harmful, and in fact helps the body's immune system fight off the infection.
- There is no advantage to lowering your child's fever except for comfort (mood, ability to sleep and eat/drink better). Treat your child with the intention of helping them feel more comfortable. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen (older than 6 months) can be used to help children feel better.
- Fever reducing medication does not cure fever, it temporarily reduces it. The fever is likely to return when the fever-reducing medication has worn off.
- Fever tends to rise as the day goes on.
- Fever does not cause damage to the brain or other organs.
- Febrile seizures (seizures with fever) occur in only 2-4% of children when they have a fever.

When to contact your pediatrician

- When the fever has been present for 72 hours
- Difficulty breathing (not just a stuffy nose)
- Vomiting/inability to keep liquids down for more than 24 hours
- Excessive irritability, even when the fever is lowered
- Any child 6 weeks or younger with temperature > 100.4F (38C)
- Or any other concern you may have...