

# ATHENS PEDIATRICS, PLLC

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## FEVER: KNOW THE FACTS

Fever is defined as a temperature **greater than 100.4**. It is only a symptom, not a disease. **Fever is part of your child's immune system and helps fight infection by trying to burn up the germ or virus causing the infection.** It is similar to boiling water to purify it. Fevers can be caused by many sources including viruses, bacteria, and inflammatory conditions such as teething. Fevers are also very common after a child receives vaccines since the body is mounting an important immune response. Remember that antibiotics are only helpful if the fever is caused by a bacterial infection.

If your child has a fever, there are several things you can do to help relieve the discomfort. Remember to focus on the way the child feels rather than exclusively focusing on the number on the thermometer.

1. Give plenty of fluids such as water, popsicles, Jell-O, ice chips, and Pedialyte.
2. Dress your child lightly and remove all tight fitting clothing and covering.
3. Tylenol or Motrin are the two medications available to control fever. **Motrin should not be given to infants under the age of 6 months.** These medications can be used in the dosage as outlined in the chart below. **Motrin can be given up to every 6 hours or Tylenol can be given up to every 4 hours.** If the patient is very uncomfortable between doses, Tylenol and Motrin can be alternated every 3 hours. For example, if Tylenol is given at 10 a.m., then the Motrin can be given at 1 p.m. and Tylenol may be given again at 4 p.m. Only give medication if the child is uncomfortable.

### Acetaminophen= Tylenol

### Ibuprofen= Motrin & Advil

| Weight     | Acetaminophen Children's Liquid (160mg/5ml) | Ibuprofen Infant Liquid (50mg/ 1.25 ml) | Ibuprofen Liquid (100mg/5ml) |
|------------|---|---|------------------------------|
| 6-11 lbs.  | 1.25 ml                                     |   |                              |
| 12-17 lbs. | 2.5 ml                                      | 1.25 ml                                 | 2.5 ml                       |
| 18-23 lbs. | 3.75 ml                                     | 1.875 ml                                | 4 ml                         |
| 24-35 lbs. | 5 ml  | 2.5 ml                                  | 5 ml                         |
| 36-47 lbs. | 7.5 ml                                      | 3.75 ml                                 | 7.5 ml                       |
| 48-59 lbs. | 10 ml                                       | 5 ml                                    | 10 ml                        |
| 60-71lbs.  | 12.5 ml                                     |   | 12.5 ml                      |
| 72-95lbs.  | 15 ml                                       |   | 15 ml                        |
| 96+ lbs    | 20 ml                                       |   | 20 ml                        |

4. If you are unable to control your child's fever with above measures, you can give a lukewarm sponge bath.
5. Remember that it is common to have a fever for 2 to 3 days with most illnesses even when antibiotics and other good treatment measures are used. Fever by itself is rarely dangerous as long as you know all the proper facts and are following your doctor's advice.
6. **If a fever is greater than 104, we recommend that you call the office to make an appointment as there is an increased chance that a bacterial infection is present.**
7. If your child appears quite ill with difficulty breathing, lethargy (extremely sleepy or tired), or not taking fluids well, your doctor should be notified immediately or your child should be taken to the Emergency Room.

# FEVER FACTS

**MYTH-** All fevers are bad for children

**FACT-** Fevers turn on the body's immune system. They help the body fight infection. Normal fevers between 100°-104° F (37.8°- 40° C) are good for sick children.

**MYTH-** Fevers above 104°F (40°C) are dangerous. They can cause brain damage.

**FACT-** Fevers with infections don't cause brain damage. Only temperatures about 108°F (42°C) can cause brain damage. It's very rare for the body temperature to climb this high. It only happens if the air temperature is very high. An example is a child left in a closed car during hot weather.

**MYTH-** All fevers need to be treated with fever medicine.

**FACT-** Fevers only need to be treated if they cause discomfort. Most fevers don't cause discomfort until they go above 102° or 103°F (39°-39.5°C)

**MYTH-** Without treatment, fevers will keep going higher.

**FACT-** Wrong, because the brain has a thermostat. Most fevers from infection don't go above 103° or 104° F (39.5°-40°C). They rarely go to 105° or 106°F (40.6° or 41.1°C). While these are "high" fevers, they also are harmless ones.

**MYTH-** With treatment, fever should come down to normal.

**FACT-** With treatment, most fevers come down 2° or 3°F (1° or 1.5°C).

**MYTH-** If you can't "break the fever", the cause is serious.

**FACT-** Fevers that don't come down to normal can be caused by viruses or bacteria. The response to fever medicines tells us nothing about the cause of the infection.

**MYTH-** Once the fever comes down with medicines, it should stay down.

**FACT-** It's normal for fevers with most viral infections to last for 2 or 3 days. When the fever medicine wears off, the fever will come back. It may need to be treated again. The fever will go away and not return once the body overpowers the virus. Most often, this is day 3 or 4.

**MYTH-** If the fever is high, the cause is serious.

**FACT-** If the fever is high, the cause may or may not be serious. If your child looks very sick, the cause is more likely to be serious.

**MYTH-** The exact number of the temperature is very important

**FACT-** How your child looks is what's important. The exact temperature number is not.

**MYTH-** Oral temperature between 98.7° and 100° F (37.1° to 37.8°C) are low-grade fevers.

**FACT-** These temperatures are normal. The body's normal temperature changes throughout the day. It peaks in the late afternoon and evening. A true low-grade fever is 100° to 102°F (37.8°-39°C).

Keep in mind that fever is fighting off your child's infection. Fever is one of the good guys.

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