

## When should I seek further help for my child?

### If your child:

- Gets worse or you are more worried about them or are worried that you can't look after them
- Is not drinking
- Is passing less urine than normal
- Has a fever that lasts longer than 5 days
- Is under 3 months old and has a fever
- Has signs of dehydration

Your child needs to see or speak to a nurse or doctor today, as soon as possible.

Please phone your child's GP surgery, the NHS 111 service, or attend your local walk in centre

## Useful numbers

**Practice Plus (Brighton walk-in centre / GP service)** Telephone 0300 130 3333  
Open every day from 8am to 8pm, including bank holidays.  
[www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk](http://www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk)

For out of hours GP service or advice ring NHS 111

**Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital**  
Children's Emergency Department  
01273 696955 Ext. 2593

Please be aware that CED staff will not be able to give you medical advice for your child over the phone but can direct you to an appropriate service to assist with your enquiry



Produced by the Children's Emergency Department

Ref number: 407.4

Publication date: March 2021. Review date: March 2024



© Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust  
Disclaimer: The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

# the alex

## Fever

Children's Emergency Department

## What is a fever?

A fever or high temperature is when your child's temperature is above 38°C. A fever is the body's natural response to an infection. Most fevers are not serious and will not harm your child.

Fevers can be caused by a range of things such as coughs and colds or other viral infections, common childhood infections like chicken pox or tonsillitis, or even immunisations. However, sometimes a fever can be a sign of a serious infection such as meningitis or sepsis.

## What do I do if my child has a fever?

If your child has a fever, you can usually look after them at home by following the advice below:

- Offer your child regular fluids. If your baby is breast feeding, the best fluid is breast milk.
- Check your child for signs of dehydration.

### Your child might be dehydrated if they:

- have a dry mouth
- have a sunken soft spot (babies under 1 year)
- have no tears
- have sunken eyes
- seem generally more unwell

- If you think your child is dehydrated, encourage them to drink more fluid (e.g. squash, water, breast milk) and seek further advice from their GP or NHS 111 today.

- Children with fever should not be under or overdressed. Tepid (lukewarm) sponging is not recommended for treating fever and should be avoided.
- Check on your child frequently, especially overnight, for any signs of serious illness, such as in the red box overleaf.
- Keep your child at home while they have a fever and let their school or nursery know that they are unwell.
- If a rash appears, do the Tumbler Test (see opposite)
- **Using medicines for your child's fever**
  - If your child is distressed or in pain you can give your child medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.
  - You do not need to give medications just to bring down the temperature.
  - Try not to give the two medications together; you can consider switching to the other medication if your child is still distressed or in pain.
  - Never give aspirin to your child unless directed by a doctor.

### The Tumbler Test

Do the Tumbler Test (also known as the glass test) 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 which could be a sign of a serious infection.

**If this rash is present your child needs to be seen urgently.** The rash is harder to see on dark skin so check paler areas, such as palms of the hands, soles of the feet, and tummy.



(Photo courtesy of the Meningitis Research Foundation)

## When should I bring my child to hospital?

If your child:

- Becomes difficult to rouse
- Becomes pale and floppy
- Is finding it hard to breathe
- Has a fit
- Develops a non-blanching rash (see the Tumbler Test)
- or you are concerned that your child is very unwell

**Your child needs to be seen urgently.**  
Phone 999 for an ambulance  
or go straight to your nearest  
Emergency Department