



Paracetamol and Ibuprofen for the Treatment of fever in Childhood

High Temperature (Fever) in Children

If your child has a high temperature (fever) then in addition to medicines such as paracetamol and ibuprofen, you can: take off their clothes and give them lots to drink.
See a doctor if they do not improve.

What causes high temperatures?

- **Viral infections** are the common cause. Virus infections cause many common illnesses such as colds, coughs, 'flu, diarrhoea, etc. Sometimes virus infections cause more serious illnesses.
- **Bacterial infections** are less common than viral infections, but also cause high temperatures. Bacteria are more likely to cause serious illness such as pneumonia and meningitis.
- **Other types of infection** are uncommon causes of a high temperature in the UK.

What should I do?

- **Use the study medications as instructed.**
- **Keep the child lightly dressed** if the room is normal 'room temperature'. IT IS WRONG TO WRAP UP A FEVERISH CHILD.
- **Give cool drinks.** This helps to lower the temperature and prevents dehydration.

Do not 'cold-sponge' a child who has a high temperature. This used to be popular, but it is now not advised. This is because the blood vessels under the skin may become narrower (constrict) if the water is too cold. This reduces the heat lost from the body, and can trap heat in deeper parts of the body. The child may then get worse. Many children also find cold-sponging uncomfortable.

Some people use a fan to cool a child. Again, this may not be a good idea if the fanned air is too cold. However, a gentle flow of air in a room which is 'room temperature' may be helpful. Perhaps just open the window, or use a fan on the other side of the room to keep the air circulating.

What should I look out for?

A child with a high temperature may look quite unwell. He or she may be flushed and irritable. However, most bouts of high temperature are not caused by serious illness, and the temperature often comes down quickly. It is quite common to see a child happily playing an hour or so later when their temperature has come down. They will not be entirely back to normal, but it is reassuring if a child improves with the drop in temperature.

As a rule, a child with a serious infection will usually become worse, and more ill, despite efforts to bring their temperature down. In addition, they may have other worrying symptoms. For example, breathing problems, drowsiness, convulsions, pains, or headaches, which become worse despite paracetamol and/or ibuprofen.

See a doctor if a child does not improve soon, or has any worrying symptom.