



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Children younger than five years with a fever

Discharge advice sheet for carers of children younger than five years who have a fever

A normal temperature in babies and children is about 36.4C, but this can vary slightly from child to child. A high temperature is 38C or more.

A high temperature is the body's natural response to fighting infections like coughs and colds. Many things can cause a high temperature in children, from common childhood illnesses like chickenpox and tonsillitis, to vaccinations.

We think that the child is well enough to go home now, but please contact your nearest Emergency Department if the child develops any of the following:

- The child's health seems worse
- You are worried or have concerns about looking after the child at home
- The child has a fit
- The child develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (tumbler test).
- The fever lasts longer than five days

What to do when your child has a fever:

Do:

- ✓ Give them plenty of fluids – offer regular drinks. If your child is breastfed the most appropriate fluid is breast milk
- ✓ Look out for signs of dehydration - sunken fontanelle (soft spot on a baby's head), dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears and dry nappies
- ✓ Give them food if they want it
- ✓ Check on your child regularly during the night
- ✓ Keep them at home
- ✓ Give them paracetamol if they're distressed or unwell
- ✓ Get medical advice if you're worried about your child
- ✓ Try to keep your child at home and avoid contact with other people until they do not have a high temperature

Do Not:

- × Undress your child or sponge them down to cool them, a high temperature is a natural and healthy response to infection
- × Cover them up in too many clothes or bedclothes
- × Give aspirin to children under 16 years of age
- × Combine ibuprofen and paracetamol, unless a GP tells you to
- × Give paracetamol to a child under 2 months
- × Give ibuprofen to a child under 3 months or under 5kg
- × Give ibuprofen to children with asthma
- × Ever give a child aspirin

Checking on the child

Check the child during the night for rashes and to see if they are getting better. If a rash appears do the 'tumbler test'. If you are concerned that the child is not improving call NHS 111 for advice or attend your local Emergency Department.

Keep the child away from nursery or school whilst they have a fever and notify the school or nursery of the illness.

The 'Tumbler Test'

Do the 'tumbler test' if the 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 rash is present seek medical advice immediately. The rash is harder to see on dark skin so check pale areas such as palms of hands, soles of feet and the tummy.

① If you have further concerns about your child's condition, please contact your GP. If you are not sure what to do, call 111 or get help from 111 online: <https://111.nhs.uk/> [When to use NHS 111 - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

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