

ILLNESS

As your baby grows older he will eventually develop fevers, colds, and other conditions, which are self-limiting and not serious. Most of the illnesses that young children get are “viral” infections and there are hundreds of viruses that can cause disease. In the majority of cases your baby will recover from these illnesses with symptomatic treatment alone (*fluids, rest, fever-reducing medication such as “Tylenol”*).

PLEASE NOTE: ANTIBIOTICS DO NOT CURE FEVER, COLDS, DIARRHEA, FLU, OR ANY OTHER VIRAL ILLNESS.

Antibiotics will **not** be prescribed over the phone without first seeing your child.

Fever

Fever is one of the most common reasons for a patient to consult a physician. Below are listed a few thoughts on fever:

1. What is a fever? There is not one normal temperature. In general, we accept 97° F to 100.3°F (rectal) as the normal range. The actual temperature will vary according to the time of day and the site and method of measurement. The rectal temperature is normally about 1° F above the oral temperature. An oral temperature of 99.6° F and rectal of 100.4° F may be perfectly normal.
2. How should fever be treated? Fever is only a symptom and in itself not usually harmful. In fact, fever is an important defense mechanism the body uses to fight disease, especially infections. Even a temperature of 104° F to 105° F is no threat except in the occasional child who develops seizures with a fever. We should pay careful attention to the overall condition of the child and treat the condition causing the fever if possible. Remember, antibiotics do not cure fever! Do **not** give aspirin for fever! We usually use one of the common anti-fever medications such as acetaminophen (*Tylenol*) for fever of 101° F or above. Do not give medications for fever to an infant less than 2 months of age without consulting a physician. If the fever is over 104° F then a tepid water bath for 30-40 minutes may help bring the temperature down.

Warning Signs For newborns (1-30 days of life) and when to call the doctor:

1. A rectal temperature less than 97° F or greater than 100.4°
2. Change in behavior, not responding to feeding (breast feeding/bottle feeding), excessively fussy and unable to console.
3. Poor sucking and/or refusal to feed.
4. Persistent vomiting and/or green or yellow colored emesis and frequent watery bowel movements.
5. Change in the baby’s color: yellow (jaundice), blue, or pale.

Common Signs of Illness In Children, which should be reported:

1. Under 3 months of age and a rectal temperature of 100.4° F or higher.
2. 3-6 months of age and temperature over 101° F for more than 48 hours, without any other symptoms.
3. Vomiting repeatedly (*not just spitting up*) or refusal to nurse or take a bottle for 2 consecutive feedings.
4. Listlessness, decreased activity, extreme irritability, or prolonged crying.