

# Fever in children

## Information for parents/carers

Most children with a fever get better very quickly but some children can get worse. You need to check your child regularly and follow the advice below

### How is your child?

Not too unwell

If your child does not have any of the features mentioned below and you feel that you can manage to care for him/her

Not all children with fever need to see a doctor. Watch your child for any of the changes listed on this sheet and contact someone if you become concerned.

If your child does not have any of the features mentioned below but you are worried about your child or how to care for him/her

Contact your GP to make an appointment or health services as detailed below.

Not too unwell

If your child

- is not drinking
- is not passing water (peeing) much
- has persistent vomiting
- has signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, no tears
- is drowsy
- generally seems more unwell
- has fast breathing
- has a fever lasting longer than 5 days even though you are not worried about anything else

Immediately contact your GP to make an appointment for your child to be seen that day. If you are unable to contact your GP go to a Walk-in Centre/ Urgent Care Centre, contact the Out of Hours Service or NHS Direct (0845 4647)

Very unwell

If your child

- is difficult to wake
- is floppy
- is very irritable or has an unusual cry
- becomes very pale
- develops a rash that does not disappear with pressure (see the 'tumbler test')
- is finding it hard to breathe

**Ring 999-you need help immediately**

## What is a fever?

A fever is an increase in your child's body temperature. Fever in children is common and can cause anxiety for parents and carers.

Almost all children recover quickly and without problems. In a very small proportion of children, the fever may not improve or the child's health may worsen, which can sometimes be a sign of a serious illness or infection.

## How to manage your child at home

- Check your child during the night to make sure that they are not getting worse
- If a rash appears do the tumbler test (see guidance below)
- If you are concerned that your child is not improving follow the advice on the front of this sheet
- Children with fever should not be over dressed
- If your child is hot to touch remove some of their clothes
- Offer your child small frequent drinks
- If you are not sure if you should keep your child away from nursery or school while he/she is unwell your health visitor, community nurse or GP will be able to advise you.
- If you do keep your child away please notify the nursery or school that he/she is unwell.

## Using medicines to help

- You may use paracetamol or ibuprofen to help your child feel more comfortable
- Use either paracetamol or ibuprofen and if your child has not improved 2-3 hours later you could try giving the other medicine
- Please read the instructions on the medicine bottle first for the doses
- You could ask your local community pharmacist for more advice about medicines
- Never give aspirin to a child

## The tumbler test

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

