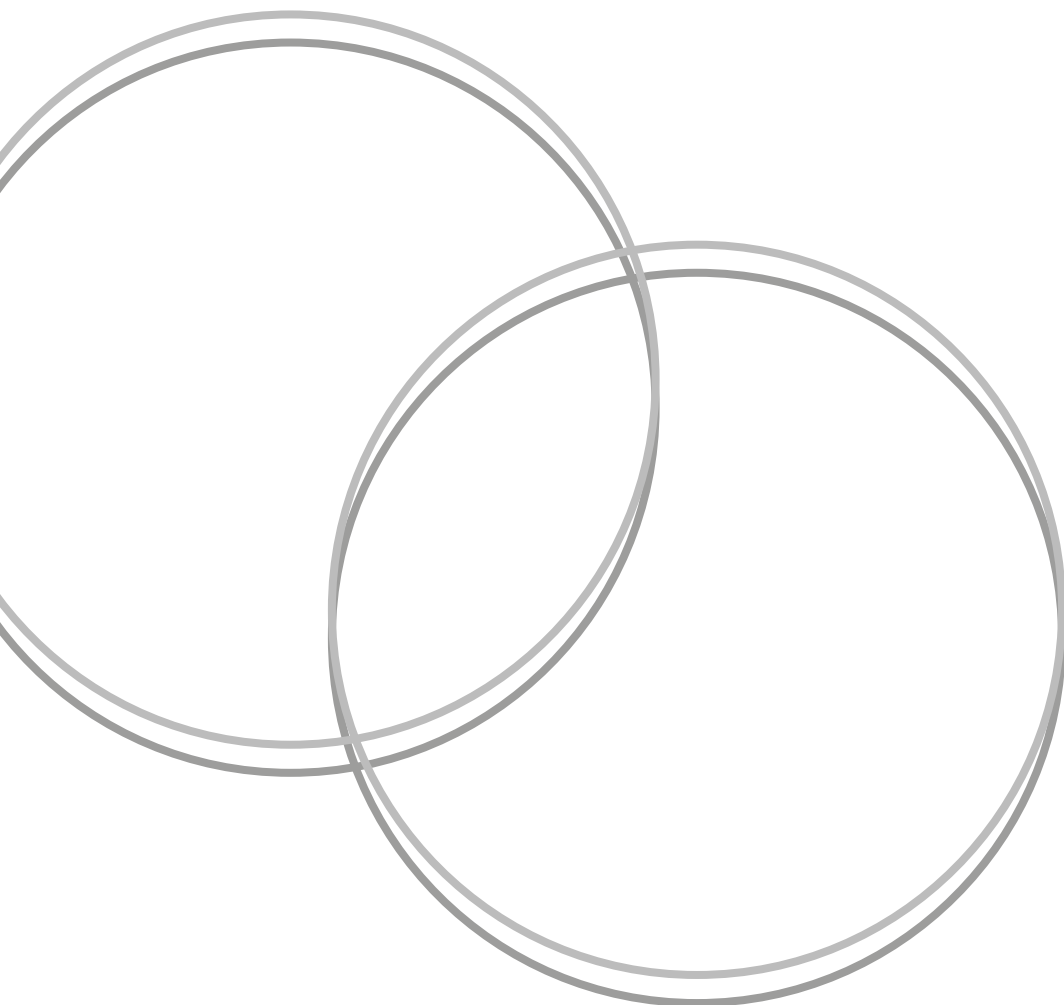




Oxford University Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Fever

**Information for Parents or Carers**



## **What is a fever?**

- A fever is a temperature of 38°C or above.
- Most fevers (high temperatures) in children are not serious and are due to common infections in childhood such as coughs, colds and other viral infections. However sometimes a fever is a symptom of a serious infection.

## **What are the symptoms?**

- Your child may feel hot to the touch or have red flushed cheeks.
- They may be lacking energy and less active when the fever is high but more active when the fever is reduced by giving Paracetamol or Ibuprofen.
- Your child's skin may look mottled (have a blotchy marbled pattern) and have cold hands and feet.
- Your child may have other symptoms to indicate the cause of the fever e.g. a runny nose, sore throat, cough or pain when passing urine- not all of these will require treatment, if unsure please contact NHS 111 or your GP for advice.
- If they develop a rash do the 'glass test'.

## **What is the 'glass test'?**

- Push a glass firmly against the rash.
- If you can see the spots through the glass and they do not fade as you push the glass onto the skin this is called a 'non blanching rash'. If you see this type of rash, seek medical advice immediately by calling NHS 111 or taking your child to the Emergency Department. In an emergency call 999.

## How can I help my child?

- Keep the room cool -- around 18°C.
- Children lose heat through their skin, so remove any extra clothing they are wearing. Your child may be shivering due to being hot rather than cold, but this does not mean they need covering up. Stripping your child down to underwear or light nightwear is ideal.
- Think about giving your child Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, especially if they have a fever over 38.5°C or are uncomfortable. Follow the dosage instructions on the bottle.
- Paracetamol can be given every 4-6 hours up to 4 times in 24 hours, and ibuprofen can be given 6-8 hourly, up to 3 times in 24 hours. If one does not work it is okay to try the other.
- Encourage your child to drink lots of fluids or to have frequent feeds if they are breastfed. Dilute apple juice is ideal for an older child as it provides fluids and sugar.

### **Things you should not do:**

- Do not wrap your child in a blanket
- Do not put extra clothes on your child
- Do not take your child to bed with you, the heat from your body could increase their temperature
- If you need to bath your child make sure the water is not too warm
- Do not use a flannel or sponge to cool your child with water. This does not help to reduce a fever

# What do I do if my child has a fever? (traffic light advice)

## RED

### **If your child has any one of these below:**

- Becomes unresponsive
- or becomes blue
- or if your child is struggling to breathe
- or has a convulsion (seizure)
- or develops a rash that does not disappear with the 'glass test'
- or has a weak, high pitched or continuous cry

## AMBER

### **If your child has any one of these below:**

- If your child gets worse or you are worried
- If your child is not drinking
- Your child is weeing less/ has less wet nappies
- If your child has signs of dehydration including dry mouth, sunken eyes, sunken fontanelle (soft spot on babies head), drowsiness and generally seems more unwell
- If your child's fever lasts longer than 5 days
- If you suspect a bacterial cause for fever such as a urine infection
- Your child is limping, has joint pain or swelling
- If your baby is under 6 months

## GREEN

**If none of the features in the red or amber boxes above are present.**

# IF YOUR BABY IS UNDER 6 MONTHS OLD SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE WITHOUT DELAY

## You need **EMERGENCY HELP**

Call **999** – you need to be seen at the accident and emergency (A&E) department

### **Nearest Hospitals (open 24 hours 7 days a week):**

- John Radcliffe, Oxford
- Horton, Banbury
- Royal Berkshire, Reading
- Great Western, Swindon
- Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury

**Bring your child's Red Book with you.**

## You need to seek medical advice

Mon-Fri 8am to 6.30pm ring your GP surgery

All other times and bank holidays call NHS 111

**Bring your child's Red Book with you.**

## Self care

Using the advice on this leaflet you can care for your child at home.





## Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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